

Supreme Lord 701

Chapter 701 Trust, Greed & Naivety

After the friends talked for a while, Zeke mentioned something Michael had totally forgotten about.

"By the way, I noticed that you haven't submitted your final exams yet. Are you planning to leave the academy, or did you forget to apply for exam exemption?"

Michael tilted his head in confusion.

"You...have no idea what I'm talking about, right?" Zeke figured.

"No. Well, yes. It's just that I forgot that I'm still a student at the academy. I don't know why, but I feel like I graduated already," Michael said in all honesty. He thought deeply, "How do I apply for exam exemption?"

It was a hassle, but it was better to apply for an exam exemption than leave the Sapphirelake Military Academy. He didn't care much about studying there anymore, but he figured that it was good to stay since it was the first place where Berserkers, Warlock Centaurs, and Humans were taught together.

It was a great place to find suitable Awakened for his territory. His friends were also at the Sapphirelake Military Academy. He didn't really want to leave. However, Michael was not willing to continue studying either.

"Most Descendants apply for study and exam exemption after their second year in most academies. They learned enough in their youth to graduate, but instead of graduating immediately, they socialize with others and focus on their territory development. Most Descendants will improve their understanding of their Inheritance techniques and Legacy Arts after their second year at the Sapphirelake Military Academy. That's also why most families consider their children's growth until they turn 20 as the establishing of their foundation," Zeke explained.

"It's still important that we're not slower than our peers, but our parents think that it is more important to establish a proper foundation in the first two years of our awakening. Two years, or four years in the Origin Expanse, are supposed to be more than enough to solve all issues with your territory's

environment if there are any, and to create the perfect foundation to start expanding aggressively after that," Lincoln added, taking Michael by surprise.

"So, you're saying that you guys didn't even start expanding aggressively yet?" Michael asked. He was certain their families had supported his friends so much to ensure they could expand aggressively, but that didn't seem to be the case.

"Well, I didn't have many enemies to fight in my territory, so I have already begun expanding aggressively. I have four settlements, and the land I've claimed is large enough to build a few more settlements if necessary. But by expanding my territory, I found more enemies. I have yet to deal with a few monster habitats, and my scouts found more Lords, who may turn into problems."

Kaleb's words seemed to trigger Lincoln and Zeke. They looked at each other with a sense of urgency.

'Is that important?'

[Of course, it is important. Kaleb has a considerable advantage. He has already secured four settlements. As long as he can solidify his defenses, he can create a few more settlements to expand the population in his territory even further. According to his words, his land is ample as well. As long as his land is not dead, he will find deposits of precious resources. He can gain a fortune from his territory using his advantageous starting point.]

[Combined with the resources provided by his family, Kaleb will be able to expand much faster than his peers. He is also a Tier-3 Lord with a 7-Star Soultrait at a young age. As long as he doesn't make any big mistakes, he will grow faster than most Lords. Once he ascends to a Higher Lifeform, he will be stronger and more influential than most families. He will become one of mankind's pillars of support. Staying close to him will be very beneficial for Lincoln and Zeke. HOWEVER, at the same time, they will be pressured to grow faster to not fall behind Kaleb. Their families will push them to expand, ensuring that Kaleb won't abandon them. After all, Kaleb could consider their friendship useless if they don't have any assets to use.]

'That is weird. Why would Kaleb care whether Lincoln and Zeke are useful to him? We're friends.'

[I noticed that everyone considered each other friends as well, but don't you dare to be foolish enough to trust that friendship prevails over all adversaries. I trusted my Subordinates with my life as well. They backstabbed me the moment I turned into a 'threat'. I wasn't even a threat. It was just that someone else gave them enough benefits to deceive me just like that.]

'It won't be—...'

[It won't be like that with your friends? Don't be foolish. You never know what happens. What if the Supreme Human Alliance offers them your Extraction Soultrait in exchange for betraying you? They might have the means to rip your Soultraits out of your body. The person who betrayed me, or one of them, had a duplication-like Soultrait. What if someone duplicates Extraction, kills you, and extracts your Soultraits? They will get their hands on Extraction that way.]

It was rare to see Danny this serious. His words were painful, but there was a trace of truth in them.

[No matter how much you care about them...you don't know how they'll think about you in the future. You have no clue how influential greed is.]

'But...'

[You don't have to be suspicious of your friends, but never say that they would never deceive you. You don't know that. The only ones who won't betray you are Tiara, Frederik, the Berserkers, and Warlock Centaurs who underwent the rite of the War Goddess. The True Links of Loyalty and the Oath of Loyalty aren't things that come into existence if they're not 100% loyal to you.]

The others didn't notice that Michael spoke to Danny. They were busy talking to each other about their territories, their businesses, and the like.

Michael was a little uncomfortable as Danny's words resounded in his mind, but it was not like his brother was wrong. He knew he had been foolish to trust his friends would never deceive him. It was just that Michael didn't want to acknowledge the possibility.

Michael was aware that his friends were jealous of his Soultraits. He also knew that they were happy for him. Deep in their hearts, they couldn't help but think that it was unfair that Michael was so fortunate to

awaken Extraction. They didn't even know half of what Michael had to endure to fuse so many Soultraits. Most people would have died long before they procured their third Soultraits, yet Michael prevailed. He survived. He defeated everyone who obstructed his path.

He learned to be ruthless in the face of those who wanted to harm him.

Michael sighed deeply. He didn't know how their discussion about the exam exemption turned into this.

"Why are politics such a mess?" Michael mumbled, but everyone could hear him.

Lincoln and Zeke stared at them with a tinge of guilt and surprise in their eyes while Maria looked at him a little sad. It was not hard to tell that Michael understood only a portion of what was going on in front of him now.

Michael was still relatively new to the political world and hated it.

Chapter 702 Flirt?

?Everyone could tell that Michael progressed faster than everyone else. However, even if Michael hadn't progressed this fast, he wouldn't have been worried about Kaleb's growth. If anything, it would be nice to hear that his friend quickly expanded his territory in the Origin Expanse.

Unfortunately, Lincoln and Zeke felt the pressure weighing hard on them. The moment they reported to their families how much Kaleb had improved, their lives would turn upside down. For now, their parents didn't pressure them too much. They told them to stay close to Kaleb, Michael, Killian, Maria, and some other Descendants to find out which families would be best to tie to them, but that may change soon.

Their focus would transfer to the Origin Expanse, where they would have to expand their territory and construct several settlements to catch up or surpass Kaleb. Their families had high hopes for them. They didn't want to see anyone surpass them, especially not their friends and those circling them.

Maria was luckier than the childhood friends. She didn't have too much pressure weighing her down. None of the Seraphs had much trouble in the first place. They were known for expanding their territory slowly but steadily. Their focus was on battles of attrition since they had various healers on their side. Even the probability of summoning a Healer as a Summon was higher for the Seraph family.

The Seraphines, the armies of the Seraph household, could fight for weeks once their Summons performed well enough with the special Seraphine Techniques created by the first Matriarch of the Seraph household.

Maria didn't care too much about politics. However, she was pulled into it when she was young as a member of the Seraph household's main branch. She was the daughter of the Tritan Alliance's most influential Healers. Her awakening increased her influence and impact on the political world even more. That was the worst for Maria.

She couldn't even imagine how Michael must feel. He was never politically influential before his awakening, only to become one of the most important chess pieces in the Tritan Alliance. He was uncontrollable, but that was precisely what many families wanted to make use of. He was unpredictable and didn't hesitate to show how he felt. Michael didn't see a need to act overly friendly to people he didn't like. There was no need to be polite to jerks. Some families felt they could use that to get rid of their enemies. They didn't even have to pull Michael to their side. All they had to do was to push their enemies in Michael's direction with small tricks.

Michael was aware of that, but he didn't mind. He acted as he pleased, which was dangerous.

Maria could accept that. Michael was not someone born into the High Society. Kaleb was different. However, he was even more foolish than Michael. Kaleb was naive and ignorant about the political world. It was almost as if he was born as a nonpolitical figure like Michael. That was Alice's fault.

Alice did her utmost to ensure Kaleb wouldn't be pulled into the political world. She succeeded in her attempt, but Maria was unsure if that was good or bad.

'His ignorance makes him more likable, though. He was an idiot before he met Michael, but thinking about it...he is kinda cute.'

Kaleb's foolishness was adorable. His genuine attitude made it hard to dislike him. Maria hadn't been friends with the others for a long time, but she could tell that Kaleb was to be trusted. Lincoln and Zeke were still unsure about their stance. However, Maria could feel that they were pulled toward Michael's side slowly and steadily. They didn't like the political world either. Escaping it wasn't easy, but the childhood friends wondered if it would be possible with Michael on their side.

Or maybe...it would be worse if they stayed with Michael.

They had yet to make the final call. It was only a matter of time.

'The next few years are going to be...wild...' Maria predicted, glancing at the humans who would be the pillars of the Tritan Alliance.

She hoped that everything would be alright.

Looking at Kaleb and Michael, Maria could only hope they would stay on the same side. They fought each other well, and they controlled each other. It was perfect that way.

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"I can't apply for an exam exemption or a study exemption? That's...annoying," Michael grumbled.

He called Sapphirelake Military Academy's management only to find out he didn't meet the requirements to apply for the exam exception. The woman he was talking to was hesitant and very apologetic. She mumbled to the other women in the headquarters of the management department, indirectly hinting to Michael that something was going on. He figured that he heard bits and pieces of information from the woman talking to her coworker.

"Did you offend anyone?" Kaleb stopped midway and smiled wryly. Of course, you did.

"The better question would be. Who did he not offend?" Frederik chuckled.

Michael retained his smile. He thought about what to do for a moment before turning to Zeke.

"If I fail all exams, I'll be expelled from the academy, right?" Michael asked.

"Not really. You will receive some bad marks, but that's what matters. It looks like someone wants to tarnish your reputation without affecting your life in the Saphirelake Military Academy too much."

"What a coward," Michael chuckled before turning to Kaleb. After he considered his options, he typed on the crystal watch and called Alice.

"Michael? You never call. Is something wrong?" Alice asked almost immediately. Her voice was loud enough to be listened by everyone. Lincoln and Zeke glanced at each other in surprise while Maria frowned.

Kaleb, on the other hand, smiled.

Perfect.

"Nothing is wrong. I was just wondering if you need an assistant. I found a cheap aide who is strong, talented, and extremely handsome."

Frederik frowned now as well. Like the others, he stared at Michael, trying to figure out what he was up to.

"Why do you want to be my assistant?" Alice inquired right away. She instantly knew that Michael was talking about himself.

"Easy. I'll drop out of the Saphirelake Military Academy but don't want to leave the campus."

No one spoke a word for a while. It took her a few moments to regain her senses, but Alice agreed readily.

"Are you planning to hire an assistant to do your work while you are registered as my assistant?"

"I didn't think about that, but that sounds like a good idea. Less work for me." Michael thought aloud.

"That's fine with me. However, you'll have to meet me at least once a week after I register you as my assistant." Alice pointed out.

Michael didn't think that was an issue. If anything, gathering up with Alice alone seemed like a reward.

"That's fine with me, but why?"

"Because I say so," Alice grinned on the other side of the phone.

"Okay. It's a date then," Michael teased Alice.

He didn't know why he expressed that, but it sensed like the right move.

"W-what?" Alice began coughing.

She stared at the holographic screen to see if she was speaking to Michael or on a call with someone else.

"You don't want to?" Michael asked, "Fine, then our gathering will be work—..."

"No. That's fine," Alice said, her voice higher-pitched than before.

"It's a date then."

Chapter 703 Date I

Michael was hesitant initially, but teasing Alice was quite fun.

She responded better to his teasing than expected. He hadn't had a good talk with Alice for a while now. The date would change that.

Maria's complexion distorted drastically upon hearing

Michael. She nibbled her lower lip and stared at him, yet Michael didn't notice anything. He was too busy having fun with Alice.

Complicated feelings surfaced from the depth of her very being.

Kaleb, the densest guy in the group, noticed a change in Maria's stance. She stood there as if frozen in time and continued staring at Michael. Kaleb was happy for his sister, but seeing Maria like this hurt.

'She really likes Michael.'

A burst of guilt swept through Kaleb. He couldn't help but approach Maria to distract her a little bit. It was partially his fault that Alice and Michael got closer.

"Hey Maria..."

Michael talked to his friends a little bit longer. It was nice to talk to them as long as he ignored Danny's warnings.

They resounded in his head all day, but Michael learned to ignore them.

Once the friends split up, Michael finished his business with the Sapphirelake Military Academy. He quite the academy and filled out the form to apply for Alice's assistance. The young woman responsible for the dropouts and the application forms recognized Michael. She called someone and worked slower until she was called back. After the second call, the woman smiled hesitantly at him before signing the last documents.

Michael was no longer a student starting today. He was now Alice's assistant...with an assistant working for him.

It was already late afternoon when he was done with everything. He glanced at his phone and saw that he had some time left for his dinner with Alice. His heart beat a little faster, recalling their appointment, but he forced himself to calm down.

Michael reached his room and walked past a mirror. What he saw in the mirror shocked him a little bit. He wasn't covered in dirt and blood, but Michael looked everything but clean. His hair stood in all directions, and it was a wonder that his clothes didn't fall apart. They were torn in more spots than one could count at a glance.

He glanced at the time again and disappeared into the bathroom. Michael showered first, then used a combination of Reinforced Sword Qi and the Sphere of Air to cut his hair.

Michael wanted a simple hairstyle that wouldn't annoy him once he returned to the Origin Expanse to fight. He cut the sides short and thinned out the rest of his hair. He played a bit with his hair to test the different styles he could use that way and decided that his silky hair could stay like this.

"A silver strand...weird. I never noticed that." Michael

twirled the silver strand of hair in his fingers while staring at it in the mirror.

[You look good enough. Stop staring at yourself in the mirror, you annoying narcissist! I don't want to see your little guy down there in the mirror either!!!]

Michael raised an eyebrow, "You do realize that you could have stopped accessing Spirit Eyes when I went into the shower, right?"

His brother had often seen him naked when he was younger, which is also why he wasn't ashamed to reveal himself. There was no need to be ashamed of his body in the first place. Nothing about his body ashamed him. If anything, Michael was proud of his perfectly toned physique. It was a perfect combination of ginormous power and astronomical flexibility.

[You're annoying. I can sense your self-love even in the Soul Grimoire. Don't act like a Saint!]

Michael chuckled lightly.

"Whatever. It's your fault. Nothing else matters."

[You!!!]

Michael smiled vibrantly. He wore clean clothes before departing to the campus shopping district. He didn't have any fancy clothes for dates and formal events.

'I shouldn't go over the top. A suit would be a little bit too much, right? I think a fancy black shirt and the like will be enough...probably? Alice is not going to be wearing a dress. I don't think so.

Michael was in a tricky situation but didn't want to ask Danny for help either. Unfortunately, his brother could hear his thoughts easily.

[Wear a simple suit. There is no need to go with the stuck-up suits, though. No necktie. You can remove your jacket and carry it in your hand to look a little bit more casual, but you shouldn't store it in your War Rune's storage. The jacket is still part of your overall image. If it's cold, you can offer your jacket to that ice-cold princess, who can only be tamed and molten by you, idiot]

Michael followed his brother's advice. He entered the first shop, tried on some clothes, and bought a lot more than he'd expected. At the end of the day, Michael was not sure how many sets of clothes he would need for future dates and formal meetings. He liked the feeling those fancy clothes gave him. His new haircut and fancy clothes made him feel like he was a completely different person.

The clothes were comfortable as well. However, that was mostly owned by the material used and the high-class creators who'd spun several runes into the garment to engrave various effects into them.

The clothes were pseudo-Artifacts, and thus, very expensive as well.

At last, it was time to meet Alice. Michael used Cosmic Stride to emerge near their meeting spot, a small bench surrounded by nature's beauty. He walked up to the meeting spot, happy that Alice was not yet there. It was good that he arrived before Alice.

Michael was just about to sigh in relief when he noticed that Alice approached the meeting spot a moment after Michael arrived.

'Did she wait for me to arrive first?'

He was not sure how to feel about that, but there was no time to think much. A moment later, Alice arrived before him. She smiled gently and tucked a strand of hair behind her ears.

"Am I too late?"

"You arrived early," Michael said while pointing at the time on the crystal watch. However, he also hinted to Alice that he knew about her waiting from further away.

A faint blush blossomed on her cheeks, captivating Michael. He wanted to tease her more, but his entire being was drawn to her appearance.

She didn't wear a graceful dress, but Alice looked drop-dead gorgeous. She wore a dark blue blouse and a short black skirt. Both pieces of clothing merged well with her long, wavy hair, which fluttered gently in the air. They highlighted her flawless skin and the excitement glimmering in her vibrant ocean-blue eyes.

Alice cleared her throat and circulated energy through her body to get rid of the blush before she dared to look into Michael's bewitching golden eyes again.

"Where are we going?"

Michael winked at Alice, curious what kind of reaction he could get from her.

"Just follow my lead." Visit [freeweb\(n\)ovel.com](http://freeweb(n)ovel.com) for the best reading experience

Chapter 704 Date II

Since they weren't hurrying to the restaurant, they first went for a casual walk in the nearby park.

It was not supposed to be something special, but Michael knew enough about Alice and the Zenovia family to know one thing for sure: Alice never had an ordinary life. She never had the pleasure of experiencing ordinary things.

Walking through a park and talking about all kinds of things, whether they were important or not, was one of those 'ordinary' experiences Alice never got to experience.

The pair talked about various things as they walked through the park. They started off awkward, but their earlier encounter today helped make things a little bit easier. Alice mentioned the meeting with the higher-ups of the Sapphirelake Military Academy and Michael's timely arrival. She grinned, recalling Zigard Kelton's sour face and the expression he made when Michael blacklisted him and his clan from purchasing Soultraits in the next Soultrait Auction.

Alice was curious about his plan during the next Flag War and what he was planning to do now. However, she didn't ask too much about it. Instead, Alice was curious about Michael's childhood, his family, and other more private topics they'd never discussed.

Michael told Alice everything. He didn't think that it was necessary to hide anything at this point. Sometimes, he had to ask Danny if he could tell Alice about certain stories. Of course, Danny accepted without a second hesitation. He only told Michael to avoid talking about three stories since they could shatter the good atmosphere between the couple.

Michael listened to his brother, glad that he had someone to rely on in his mind.

Michael answered Alice's questions thoroughly and honestly before he started bombarding Alice with questions as well.

Since Michael never researched the Zenovia family in detail, he didn't know much about them. That was something new for Alice, but it didn't feel bad. Knowing that Michael saw her as herself rather than Alice Zenovia excited her. He was different from the people who approached her usually. They wanted to get to know her for her family. Michael didn't care about the Zenovia family. He cared about her.

Both Alice and Michael were a little sad as the time for their reservation neared. They had to leave the park to get to the restaurant. However, that didn't mean they stopped talking on their way to the restaurant.

They saw dozens of students and professors walk past them, some even trying to approach them to say something, but the pair was caught up in their world. They didn't even notice the stares lingering on them. It was almost as if everything around them was turning into nothingness.

The only thing that mattered to them was each other. Michael hung at Alice's words just like Alice was glued to everything he said. Every spoken word was imprinted in their minds.

Michael didn't even recall the way to the restaurant or how they made it inside the private room. The last thing he noticed was a short break in their chat, and they started ordering dishes.

The dinner was fancy, and the restaurant was high-class. It was nothing unusual for Alice, who'd eaten at similar places, but everything was different with Michael by her side. Their chat was more intimate, and the vibe engulfing them was different. There was tension between Alice and Michael and bits of a romantic vibe, but it was nothing too crazy.

However, the tension and the vibes between them were enough for Michael to confirm that he adored Alice. Undoubtedly, he liked her as more than a friend and teacher.

Alice felt similar. She was always drawn to Michael more than others. At first, Alice was certain that Michael was an unpolished diamond that required refinement to become a powerful weapon and ally. Her feelings toward Michael changed quickly. She didn't realize it initially, but Michael started attracting her interest from the day he overwhelmingly defeated Kaleb.

Michael fixed Kaleb. He achieved something Alice had dreamed about.

Following that day, Alice's feelings changed every time they met. She found herself worried whenever Michael sustained injuries and whenever he didn't come back from the Origin Expanse for months. He never said what he was up to and did whatever he wanted without confirming with anyone. Alice knew he didn't have to tell anyone about anything he did, but that didn't mean she wasn't curious. Alice wanted to know more. She desired to learn more about Michael and wanted to be informed whenever he would stay in the Origin Expanse longer. After all, Alice didn't want to be worried all day about his well-being.

But why was she worried about him in the first place? Alice wasn't even concerned about Kaleb when he stayed in the Origin Expanse longer than announced.

Her date with Michael wasn't anything out of the ordinary. It wasn't a blockbuster date that cost a fortune and weeks to prepare. But it was better than anything anyone had ever prepared for her. Michael concentrated on Alice and nobody else. He paid attention to her well-being and her emotions. He listened to her intently and said precisely what she wanted to hear.

He was there for her.

Alice found herself drawn to Michael the more she thought about their date...and him. But she wasn't drawn to him like a teacher likes studious students or an older sister adores her brother's friends. No. Alice felt different.

A new emotion surfaced from the bottom of her heart. Her frozen heart began to melt, and she opened herself to the possibility of being...more than just friends with Michael.

At some point, Alice received a notification. She wouldn't have checked the message, but the notification sound was customized. Her brother sent her a message. Alice checked the message and froze in her tracks when she realized what her annoying little brother said.

[Kaleb(Annoying Brat): Do you have fun with Michael? You suit each other. P.S Don't forget to invite me to your wedding.]

Kaleb had always been a little bit annoying, but Alice didn't expect him to be this mischievous at such a time. The unexpected message took her by surprise, and she stared at it longer than intended. The last word was imprinted in her mind.

'Wedding.'

Alice's eyes pulled toward Michael as the word resounded through her mind. She swallowed hard and blushed as her fantasy went wild.

Alice found herself imagining in a large hall, holding hands with Michael. She was wearing a magnificent dress while Michael was wearing an expensive suit. They smiled at each other vibrantly and leaned in...to kiss, sealing their eternal love in front of everyone.

Alice's cheeks turned beet red as she daydreamed about the potential future with Michael. Michael observed her blush, and the corner of his lips curled upward subconsciously. His lips parted, and a word escaped before he understood what he was saying.

"Beautiful."

It was only now that Alice recalled where she was and what was going on. Her dream bubble burst, and Alice understood what Michael had just said. Alice blushed even harder, and even before she could gather a thought, her lips parted as well.

"You're mine now!"

Chapter 705 Pureblooded

"I'm...yours??" Michael's eyes widened slightly

Alice was not like that. She was the Frozen Duchess, not a lovestruck girl.

[Oh wow. Your girlfriend is quite interesting. Is she in a hurry to become my sister-in-law, or is she marking her territory?]

'Danny...'

[Yes?]

'Please, shut up,' Michael cursed in his mind, 'Furthermore, she isn't my girlfriend...or is she?'

Given that Alice had blurted out a proposal, Michael was unsure if they were together. Was that even a proposal? Michael couldn't tell. It felt like she wanted to own him..or that he belonged to her.

Heat rose to Alice's cheeks. What the hell had she just said? What demon had possessed her just now?

She jumped up from her chair and stumbled to the ground, only to panic. Alice locked eyes with Michael for a quarter of a second, but that was already too much for her. She panicked, cursing herself for what she'd just said, and escaped.

"What is wrong with me?" She exclaimed in a whisper as she disappeared.

Michael was left alone in the restaurant, but he was not unhappy. Quite the contrary. Michael activated Spirit Eyes to follow Alice as she ran away before disappearing into the Origin Expanse.

The corner of his lip curled upward.

"Is it just me, or is Alice cuter than ever?" He mumbled to himself.

[How am I supposed to know that?]

"Nobody was talking to you, Danny. I told you to stay quiet," Michael grumbled, but his smile never disappeared.

[Whatever. Fact is she loves you. Be happy...and help me get resurrected. I don't want to witness when you and Alice start with the babymaking project!]

"Alive, you were never shameless. Or did I never know your true self?" Michael grumbled.

[Who knows?] Danny teased, causing Michael to groan once again.

He shook his head and opened the crystal watch to message Alice. Michael told her he liked the date and would love to meet her again. He added a few days when he should be free and hoped Alice would return from the Origin Expanse to message him soon. He wanted to go on another date with Alice, after all. It was fun and different from his usual troubles.

Michael noticed Kraft Viton's messages once he threw a few messages into Alice's chat. Michael recalled what Kraft Viton said about the Sacred Desert and subconsciously opened the chat with his teacher. Michael opened the reports attached to the chat and began reading with Spirit Eyes activated. Danny could read the reports alongside him that way.

[The Undead Pharaoh was probably a Divine Lifeform while he was alive. No Higher Lifeform would be given a grave like the Primedival Pyramid. However, his presence was unlike a Divine Lifeform's when I encountered him. He was probably only a 4th Tier Higher Lifeform at that time. Of course, I could be mistaken. I was on the verge of death at that time. I could hardly sense anything.]

Danny tried to joke at the end, but Michael's joyful expression distorted into anger. His blood was boiling at the thought of his brother's death and the people who betrayed him. Even if Danny returned to him, Michael would kill those who had betrayed his brother. They would feel his wrath sooner or later.

"You told me a little about the Undead fighting for the Undead Pharaoh. Maybe we can write down some information about them to help Kraft Viton. I don't really want to dash into the Sacred Desert right now, but I don't want Kraft Viton's effort to go to waste."

[That's fine with me. That old man helped you a lot. I owe him one.]

Michael smiled lightly. It was true that Kraft Viton helped him a lot. At first glance, it might seem like Michael achieved various extraordinary achievements without any help, but that was only what it looked like from the outside. In fact, Michael received lots of help from Kraft Viton, whether it was due to Whispering Energy, little whispers of advice that changed Michael's tactics entirely, or every single deal he had with the Bartholomew Corporation.

He owed Kraft Viton a big one.

"I should give him a bunch of customized Soul Techniques and Soultraits. If he doesn't want them for himself, he can give them to others," he mumbled after paying for the dinner. Michael left the restaurant and teleported back to his room, where he sat down on the bed.

Initially, he planned to return to the Origin Expanse, but there were a few things Michael had to do now that he thought about his future steps.

"Prepping for the Soultrait Auction is easy. Gifting Kraft Viton lots of things won't take long, either. That leaves...buying many things and accessing the highest level of the Bartholomew Network to research Divine Summons."

Michael spoke to himself, yet not. Danny was listening to everything he said or thought. It was just that his brother made it seem like Michael was a lunatic. He loved making fun of Michael more than anything.

[You informed me that there are some locked documents about Hesta in the Bartholomew Network. Do you want to access them?] Danny asked purely out of curiosity.

Michael frowned deeply and shook his head.

"My gut tells me that we will see her soon enough. I'm not sure if I like that or not."

[What could go wrong? Well...except her hunting you down or kidnapping you? Who knows...maybe you are too dangerous for the Nest? As a Lesser Lifeform, you have several Cursed Seals and a weird World Serpent inside you. Do you even realize how dangerous you will be once you ascend to a Higher Lifeforms?]

"Daniel Fang. You are THE BEST at motivating people. Seriously."

[Love you too]

"Oh, come on.]

Something within Michael rumbled. The Serpent Seals were triggered.

[I can hear everything you talk about. Your vessel is not soundproof.] The World Serpent hissed, [And I'm not a weir-

ass World Serpent. I'm a majestic creature, and you better respect me. Otherwise, I will no longer reinforce your connection with the Soul Sphere. You will be confined in the Soul Grimoire, unable to talk to your brother until he finds a suitable vessel to resurrect you!]

The brothers were silent for a while. Danny was the first to regain his senses.

[Sorry...]

"You sound pitiful." Michael snickered.

[Because I AM pitiful!] Danny cried out.

"Whatever, crybaby,"

The World Serpent hissed quietly to silence the brothers.

[Now that I've already used my power to scold the half-dead soul, I might as well talk to you.] The World Serpent uttered to Michael. [Researching Divine Summons won't help you a lot. I observed that you're different from your race. Your mother is similar to you, but the rest...they're not quite like you. The difference is minor, yet not. Maybe you're not a pureblood. That's nothing uncommon among Curse Users. Most of you are not pureblooded.]

Michael couldn't hide his surprise when he heard that.

"What are you talking about?"

Did he just find out that he and his family weren't humans? No, that didn't seem correct. The World Serpent uttered that they might not be pureblooded, but it wasn't sure. It didn't sound confident.

'Maybe the Curses affect our DNA? That seems logical. Cursed Children are stronger than most of their kin, which is also why Hesta and I were so powerful. Or could it be something else?

"What about Danny? Is he pureblooded?" Michael asked, curious if his theory was correct. If Danny was closer to a pureblood than he was, that could only mean that the Curse changed his DNA

But deep down, Michael sensed he was mistaken about something. He felt his ancestry was over 500 years - older than Cleave Fenrir.

Cleave Fenrir was just the beginning of the grand change.

Unfortunately, the World Serpent ignored his question.

[I doubt that you will be able to find useful pieces of information about Divine Summons and Divine Scrolls. If anything, you will discover rumors from engravings in ancient runes and other ancient places.]

The World Serpent was correct. No matter how much Michael searched, he found nothing useful about Divine Scrolls. The Tritan Alliance didn't know anything about Divine Scrolls and Divine Summons. There were merely some rumors.

The same could be uttered about the World Serpent. There were some pieces of information about it, but the thrumming in Michael's back and the ear-piercing hiss that rang through his mind were enough to comprehend that the World Serpent didn't acknowledge the information written down in the reports.

[Whoever wrote this...FIND HIM! I will eat him alive!!]

Chapter 706 Intel

Communicating with the World Serpent and Danny simultaneously was taxing. However, it was also intriguing. The World Serpent managed to silence Danny. Even Michael struggled with that.

But that didn't mean the World Serpent was reasonable. It was prideful and easily triggered. The reports Michael found in the Bartholomew Network enraged the World Serpent even though it said the Tritan Alliance was unlikely to have any proven facts about Divine Summons, Scrolls, or their 'kind'.

Michael hoped that the World Serpent would expose some useful information, but it didn't reveal much about itself. In fact, it didn't say anything about its origin or why his Mother thought that the World Serpent was a Curse. The only news was that Michael wasn't a pureblooded human.

That confused Michael for a bit, but it felt correct. Not being a pureblooded human would explain a lot.

[It's possible that Cleave Fenrir's mother fell in love with a Hyuman. She must have given birth to Cleave Fenrir outside the Origin Expanse, severing all connections to the Hyumans that way. If Cleave Fenrir was half Hyuman, his strength would make a lot more sense.] Danny theorized.

It was not likely, but the possibility was not nil.

"But if that's true, why does it feel like our family's Curse is ancient? Is the information in the tome wrong? Who was the man in the Origin Expanse? The Tome mentioned Cleave Fenrir's father often, saying that he thrashed his son and sold him the day Cleave manifested his War Rune."

[How am I supposed to know? It might have been his stepfather. The point is that Cleave's mother has never been mentioned in the Tome. She is either dead, or our bloodline is very good at getting abandoned by our mothers.]

"Not funny, Danny," Michael grumbled.

"It feels like we're missing something," He mumbled, "What happened to Cleave Fenrir to transform him into a fiendish figure who enraged one of the Demon Kings, the Elven Empress, the Dragon Emperor, and so on? What exactly did they do to our family's Curse? Did they trigger the Curse or ask the Will of the Origin Expanse to alter the curse? What even is the Curse inside me?"

[I don't know what your Curse is, but you know what my Curse was. That was definitely not Fenrir. Except if Fenrir is a white tiger engulfed in darkness.]

"The power released from Mother's Cursed Seals was similar to the darkness engulfing the tiger. It didn't feel like my Curse," Michael inclined his head. He didn't know a lot about Curses, Cursed User, and Cursed Seals yet, but he figured that the power of the Cursed Seals was related to both the Curse User's Main Soultrait and the type of Curse inside you.

[Maybe she has a Tiger Curse inside her as well. I wouldn't know. I also doubt that it's helpful to break your head about this. Mother is not here and I doubt that we will meet her anytime soon. It's more likely

that the Nest appears out of nowhere. You can question them once they appear.] Danny pointed out as the Serpent Seals on his back glimmered lightly.

[Your brother is correct. The Nest will come for you. They come for all Cursed Children. But be careful. Nobody can tell for sure if the Nest will come to eliminate you or to pick you up.] The World Serpent hissed.

"Great. Thanks for that," Michael grumbled, "When will you stop souring my mood? How about you be a nice tenant and tell me something that will help me in the future?"

The World Serpent was silent for a few seconds before it came to a decision.

[It shouldn't be a problem to tell you some things.]

Michael felt like throwing a bunch of stones at the World Serpent. It remained silent all this time, only to give in now?

'Whatever.'

"Perfect. Tell me as much as you can, please," Michael swallowed his frustration and listened intently to the World Serpent.

[I will tell you a little bit about the Achievement Shop in the Origin Expanse and information about races that sought asylum inside the Origin Expanse. That might help you understand more about the future that awaits you with the Silverfangs and your means to grow stronger as you use the Achievement Shop in the correct way.]

Michael had always been curious about the Achievement Shop. His ears perked up while the frustration accumulated in his heart dispersed.

[The Origin Expanse seems like an infinitely stretched realm, but it is more like a distorted reflection of the universe. Many older races are adamant about the theory called Origin Twins. The theory is rather simple and revolves around the birth of the universe and the Origin Expanse. It says that the universe and the Origin Expanse had once been part of the same existence. Something, a certain event, split the universe in two parts. One part of the universe was severed from the primordial source of origin energy while the other was flooded with origin energy. The Will formed from the congregated mass of the purest origin energy, only to establish the Origin Expanse as it is known.]

[The Will and the Origin Expanse were not perfectly sealed. Origin energy leaked through the origin of the Universe, the only permanent link that remained as the universe split up. As the purest origin energy invaded the universe after billions of years had passed since the universe and the Origin Expanse split up, hundreds of galaxies faced destruction. The galaxies had been void of origin energy for billions of years. They were too fragile to endure the pressure that invaded every part of space and crumbled. Countless lives were reaped on that day...and all were pulled inside the Origin Expanse. They were confined in the Origin Expanse after origin energy contaminated their very being.

[The balance created by the Will was about to collapse. To maintain the balance between the universe and its distorted reflection, the Origin Expanse, the Will created War Runes, Summoning Gates, and the system that exists to this day. Of course, you're missing lots of crucial information, but I will not tell you more about the Origin Expanse's history. Even I don't know the whole truth. Only the Will and the Primal see the truth.]

The World Serpent had yet to tell him about the Achievement Shop and useful intel about the races that sought asylum inside the Origin Expanse, but he would be the last to complain about additional information. He had no idea who the Primal was or if that was some sort of organization, but he could tell that the Will and the Primal were old—to put it simply.

[The Achievement Shop and the option to seek asylum inside the Origin Expanse are also part of the balance created by the Will according to the Twin Origin theory. The Achievement Shop is an anomaly. You can purchase whatever you want from the Achievement Shop. You could have resurrected your brother using the Achievement Shop if you'd wanted to. That is if you had enough Achievement Points.]

That was news to Michael, who had heard he couldn't resurrect his brother after dying as Masked Saber in the Origin Expanse.

[You can purchase everything from the Achievement Shop, but the price increases exponentially the more you inquire for. Purchasing a Lord Seal is significantly cheaper than buying a Kingdom

automatically linked to your War Rune. The same logic applies to all purchases in the Achievement Shop.]

Michael frowns deeply as he understands the meaning behind the World Serpent's words.

"If that's true, doesn't that mean you can also purchase Soultrait Symbols with the Achievement Shop?"

[That's correct.]

"The cheapest Soultrait Symbols will probably be drawn randomly. If I were to ask for something specific, the price for the Soultrait Symbol would increase exponentially."

[That is additionally correct.]

"So, theoretically, someone could additionally purchase my Soultrait, Extraction?"

[That...is not how it works. Extraction is...different. I can't reveal you more.]

"Why can't you reveal me more? I doubt that anyone put a Geas on you. I don't think anything can force you to do anything."

Michael couldn't reveal how strong the World Serpent was, but he was confident that it was overwhelmingly powerful.

[Some knowledge is not made for Lesser Lifeforms. Even Higher Lifeforms are not supposed to understand the truth.]

"The truth? About what?" Michael asked, but the World Serpent said nothing.

"...Thanks for that..."

Chapter 707 Racial Achievements

Michael decided to organize the new information he had learned in the last few minutes.

"So it's possible to buy everything in the Achievement Shop. Is that common knowledge? Maybe not that everything is purchasable. Otherwise, Kraft wouldn't have told me that it is impossible to resurrect Danny after he died as Masked Saber," He concluded in a whisper.

If it was common knowledge that Soultraits could be purchased in the Achievement Shop, it wouldn't make sense why everyone was crazy about his Soultrait Symbols as well.

Or everyone knew about the Soultrait Symbols in the Achievement Shop, but the price wasn't worth it. Except for random draws of new Soultrait Symbols, which may be cheap, purchasing Soultrait Symbols in the Achievement Shop was probably not worth it.

Nobody liked gachas if their lives and future depended on the result – except psychos, probably.

[I never managed to access the Achievement Shop, but I think Achievement Points are too valuable to waste on randomly pulled Soultraits. The price for customized Soultraits must be incredibly high as well. Purchasing your Soultrait Symbols, including the massive pile of information you provide them, using somewhat valuable resources from the Origin Expanse seems better than using their precious Achievement Points. They must be hoarding their Achievement Points to purchase other things.] Danny reasoned.

"But what are they saving up for?"

[How am I supposed to know?]

The World Serpent hissed in Michael's mind again, silencing the brothers.

[It would be great if you guys could be quiet while my Seals are activated. Your constant yapping is even more annoying while I'm awake. How is it possible to talk that much nonsense? Just listen to me until I'm done!]

Michael raised an eyebrow when he heard what the World Serpent said. The World Serpent was angry, yet Michael felt it begged the brothers to shut up. Nonetheless, the brothers remained silent.

[Finally, some silence.] It grumbled.

[Where was I? I was just about to talk about Racial Achievements and the races seeking asylum in the Origin Expanse. I'm only mentioning this to point out why you're summoning members of the Silverfang Tigerfolk and to grant you some insights into the mechanics of the Origin Expanse. Maybe that will help you grow stronger a little bit faster. You need to grow stronger quickly, after all.]

Silence engulfed Michael's room briefly before the World Serpent resumed the explanation.

[Back to the Racial Achievements. Racial Achievements and individual merits are different. Racial Achievements are grand achievements that have been achieved by the entire race. This includes annihilating other races, conquering whole regions in the Origin Expanse, and various other achievements. Individuals can claim Racial Achievements, but only a portion of the Achievement Points will be granted to the individual. The race will accumulate the remaining Achievement Points. The accumulated Achievement Points can only be accessed by the race's leader, if there is only one, or the government if you don't have a single leader ruling your race.]

"That means the leaders of High Society have access to the Racial Achievements and the Achievement Points that have been accumulated for 500 years," Michael realized, his eyes widening slightly.

[The Lesser Humans, or whatever your race likes to call their kind, shouldn't have many Racial Achievements until now. They've only been granted access to the Origin Expanse for half a millennium. I've read your memories, and they are embarrassing. Your kin has yet to unlock access to their personalized Soul Techniques. You guys don't even undergo a proper Soul Awakening. If the leaders of the Lesser Humans were a little bit more intelligent, they would upgrade the potency of the Awakening Stones to strengthen all newly awakened first. But their expenditures are none of my business.]

Various thoughts flashed through Michael's mind. He was getting increasingly curious about the Achievement Shop and how different the Racial Achievements looked. Was there a different shop for purchases that could only be done by mankind's leaders?

[Back to the main topic. Racial Achievements and access to the Origin Expanse are also part of how the Will manages to ensure that everyone survives coming in contact with Origin Energy and why every being that comes in contact with Origin Energy is pulled into the Origin Expanse to become Summoned after death.]

[Being exposed to origin energy for a long duration had higher chances of manifesting War Runes. If you're exposed to origin energy in your Mother's womb, you are almost certain to manifest a War Rune. The acceptance of origin energy and the manifestation of the War Rune alter your body naturally to adapt to the origin energy. After entering it for the first time, the grace period you're granted in the Origin Expanse is also part of the safety measurement to ensure that your body can naturally adapt to the changes.]

[New Races exposed to pure origin energy would undergo more changes. The Will of the Origin Expanse has to interfere and strengthen their anatomy, ensuring they won't die when the first Runic Gates open. Of course, the Will's interference is not free. The entire race will be put into debt in exchange for the opportunity they've been given and their DNA alteration.]

[...]

The World Serpent talked for a long time. Michael was certain that it hadn't spoken that long for a few decades, maybe even centuries. He didn't expect the World Serpent to be this talkative, but it exposed a vast load of intel for an entire hour. It ridiculed the Will of the Origin Expanse and praised it in the same sentence.

No matter how Michael and Danny looked at the situation, the World Serpent was a weird fellow. Michael was curious about everything the World Serpent said, but the flood of information was too much for him to digest everything. He has to use Wisdom Breaker to store all pieces of information to go through them at a later point.

Michael was unwilling to miss a single piece of information, but the questions and doubts in his mind accumulated.

"What happens if a race is unable to pay the debt? OR what happens IF a race manages to pay the debt back? Will their deceased Awakened not be pulled into the Origin Expanse and used as Summons anymore? What happens if you seek asylum while still heavily in debt?" Michael blurted out one question after another. He was too curious to stay silent at some point.

[Impatient brat.] The World Serpent hissed, but it answered nonetheless.

[If you seek asylum in the Origin Expanse, you must pay back your debt by working for the Will. You won't remember what you did for the Origin Expanse, but it will scar you forever. As for what happens in the deepest parts of the Origin Expanse where the Will resides, I cannot tell you that for now. You are too weak. The information would put you in more danger than you can imagine. If the Will discovers that a mere Lesser Lifeform knows about it...you will be dead when you return to the Origin Expanse.]

"So Tiara being my 'Battle Maid' is part of the work they must do to pay off their debt?" Michael asked.

[No. Tiara was granted permission to leave that place after the Silverfang Tigerfolk paid off their debt. But I doubt that the Silverfang Tigerfolk expected their Princess to become a mere servant.]

The World Serpent hissed loudly, but it sounded more like it was laughing.

"Yeah...That's really funny..." Michael mumbled while his mind went astray.

'Am I a magnet for lunatics or what?'

Chapter 708 Root Network

Danny was just as surprised and disgusted about some of the things he learned about the Will and the Achievement Shop.

"You can purchase the races that sought asylum...Isn't that slavery?" Michael asked while Danny continued raging on.

[So they sought asylum in the Origin Expanse, only to be sold off to some disgusting perverts?!? Where is the logic? Justice, where are you?!]

The World Serpent laughed, or the brothers presumed that it was laughing.

[It is universally known that the Will is not fair. Maybe not in a backwater galaxy, but everyone knows it. The racial debts and the Will's conditions are part of the responsibilities you will have to carry if you accept the War Rune. Nothing is forced upon you. You can still reject the War Rune by not entering the Origin Expanse in the first 24 hours after manifesting it. The Will doesn't force you to agree to its conditions. However, by entering the Origin Expanse, you accept them. It is as simple as that.]

The World Serpent hissed again.

[That was enough talking for a few months. Don't bother me. If you need my help to extract another Curse, call me. Other than that...you can use my Seals. I don't care. Don't get killed. It would be annoying to search for another—...]

The World Serpent didn't finish the last sentence. It disappeared again and deactivated the Serpent Seals.

"But you haven't answered my other questions yet," Michael grumbled alone in his room.

He secretly hoped his brother would say something, but Danny was silent.

His mind felt empty all of a sudden. It felt weird and unfamiliar. Michael chuckled lightly.

"I would feel lonely after I've been alone for so long. Sharing my mind with two weirdos sure is different."

At first, he was a bit annoyed that the World Serpent could enter his mind and read his thoughts at will, but it didn't bother him that much anymore. If anything, Michael was more curious about the World Serpent and what it could do. He was also curious why his Curse didn't start talking to him. Maybe his Curse could tell him some things about his bloodline or why it was so powerful compared to the other Curses.

Michael wanted to know why he awakened Extraction, why the Curse inside him was so strong, and if all of that was more than a mere coincidence. He encountered far more powerful beings that called him 'Cursed Child' than he wanted to count. In fact, he lived above one of those hibernating beings in the Untamed Jungle.

Michael was not sure if that being was a Curse or if it was like the World Serpent. Either way, Michael was surrounded by those mysterious beings. It did not feel like a coincidence.

'The Achievement Shop can buy everything. What if someone wanted me to have Extraction? But if that's the case...why? That doesn't really make sense, does it?'

Michael fell into a downward spiral of thoughts once again. Danny had to pull the back of his mind with some force to pull him back out of the world of thoughts.

[Focus on your tasks and the things you can change. I don't know why you're always overthinking. You cannot spend the rest of your life thinking about all those questions. Get stronger and find the answers through hard work rather than being idle while thinking about something you cannot find out with your current knowledge!]

Danny returned only to scold him. In the next moment, he disappeared again.

"Right. There is no time to stay idle. I have to expand my territory!" Michael smiled lightly. He thought about Alice and smiled lightly.

After sending her a message saying that he would enter the Origin Expanse for the next few days, Michael entered the Bartholomew Shop on campus to pick up the goods he had purchased. Various valuable goods were stored in storage satchels and other storage devices. However, none of them were for Michael. Everything stored in the storage devices was for his subjects and the territory.

Michael also finished the preparations for the next Soultrait Auction. Rumors about the Soultrait Auction spread through the Sapphire Lake Military Academy's campus, and it was only a matter of days before every supreme family, noble household, clan, and guild would realize about it. That gave Kraft Viton little time to prepare the advertisements for the next Soultrait Auction.

Michael didn't interfere plenty with Kraft Viton's plans. He prepared the Soultrait Symbols, upgraded to 3-Star, alongside information sheets about the respective Soultrait Symbols. Other than that, Michael showed Kraft Viton what he needed, including the last part to initiate the Summoning Gate's upgrade to the intermediate rank, before he left the campus.

The Lord of the Untamed Jungle returned to his territory with various treasures.

Arx looked as beautiful as ever. The origin energy in the surroundings was even denser than before, but that was not the only thing that had changed in the last six months. The energy density entire over the Untamed Jungle had increased drastically.

However, the area around the Greater Nature Spirit was the most affected. At this point, the Greater Nature Spirit accelerated the growth of all life tens of kilometers around it. Its root network stretched even farther, reaching into the Savannah Region and the Zentika Empire's plains.

Michael had to start extracting the chaos in the chaos-infested land that separated the Zentika Empire from the Untamed Jungle because the Greater Nature Spirit was harmed by the chaos infesting its roots. The environment changed wherever the Greater Nature Spirit's root network reached. More monsters nestled in range of its root network, and the flora spread wildly as well. It felt like the border to the Savannah Region was being adjusted as the Untamed Jungle expanded – stimulated by the Greater Nature Spirit.

Michael didn't really mind the changes, but he willed the Greater Nature Spirit to spread deeper into the Zentika Empire and the Untamed Jungle rather than pushing the Savannah Region aside. The Valyrs were their allies, cushion, and the reason Michael could implement the trading cycle.

The trading cycle earned Michael far more than the Agriculture Project. But that wasn't surprising. After all, Michael used the needs of five races and their massive pile of supplies to pay a low surcharge to gain massive profits. He felt a little bit like a scumbag for taking advantage of the Valyr, the Forest Elves, and the members of the Tritan Alliance, but it was not like he was asking for a huge overpay.

He paid the market price for their goods and sold them at the market price as well. Michael didn't ask for more. After all, he earned more than enough that way already

The massive profits, however, disappeared faster than Michael had expected. Preparing the materials for his monsters' evolutions drained his wealth faster than anything.

But the investment was worth it. Michael talked with Tatjana for a long time about the monsters' evolution paths and determined that their evolution would help his territory in every way.

Michael called the attendants to search for Tatjana and bring her to the Ranch, but she was already there when he arrived.

Tatjana noticed Michael's arrival and smiled from one ear to another.

"Did you bring it?" She asked, her eyes glimmering brightly.

"Yes," He nodded, "I'm ready to evolve some monsters!"

"Yay~"

Chapter 709 Marble

Michael handed the spatial satchel to Tatjana. He didn't know what to do with the goods to stimulate his monsters' evolutions. Tatjana was the woman for that job. She had the Eye of Evolution and knew precisely how to process the items to evolve the monsters.

Several vials with black viscous content appeared in her hands alongside two stones. One of the stones was a Darkness Stone, whereas the other one was a Crystallized Blood Stone. The latter looked like a Darkness Stone at first glance, but it glimmered brightly as the afternoon sun reflected on the smooth surface.

Tatjana retrieved another vial, but Michael couldn't see the content at first glance. The vial was sealed perfectly, and Michael could only see through its red surface by using Spirit Eyes with several

Enhancement layers.

"The Greater Demon's Blood, Michael recalled what he'd ordered from the Bartholomew Corporation a while ago.

He nodded subtly while following Tatjana's actions. She shattered the Darkness Stone without hesitation, and a massive wave of Darkness Energy swept through the surroundings like a shockwave.

However, Tatjana made her next move before the wave of Darkness Energy could hurt anyone. She threw the Crystalized Blood Stone into the Darkness Stone's shards, triggering the Crystalized Blood Stone. It glowed for a moment before devouring the surrounding darkness energy.

The suction force increased drastically until Michael felt it wash over him. His eyes narrowed as the wave of darkness energy dispersed. It was sucked into the Crystalized Blood Stone. Tatjana eyed the Crystalized Blood Stone for a while until she simultaneously removed the Greater Demon's Blood cap and the remaining vials. She bent down to the ground and carefully emptied the bottles above the Crystalized Blood Stone.

The Crystalized Blood Stone cracked and burst apart as the Greater Demon Blood splashed on its surface. The blood of the Greater Demon seeped into the core of the Crystalized Blood Stone alongside the black viscous liquid. A massive suctioning force drained the origin energy in the surroundings. Tatjana retrieved dozens of Lesser Energy Stones at a time when the energy in the surroundings was sucked dry. The Lesser Energy Stones crumbled within seconds, casting a bright smile on Tatjana's face.

'It works! Michael figured that something small had formed in the core of the Crystalized Blood Stone.

With the aid of the surrounding energy, a small marble formed within the Crystalized Blood Stone. Tatjana continued retrieving Lesser Energy Stones. They crumbled to dust near-instantly, costing Michael hundreds of millions at once. It was a good thing that Michael stopped counting the fortune he paid to strengthen his subjects. He knew that he would receive back much more than he'd invested.

That was how it usually worked for him. He was willing to invest a fortune into those who trusted him. In exchange, his return on these investments was much more. Of course, not every investment would be profitable, but Michael had been quite fortunate with his investments. Today's investment would be profitable as well. Michael was sure about that!

The suctioning force eventually ceased, pulling Michael out of his train of thought. He glanced at the marble that Tatjana picked up and smiled. It was a fancy marble with a unique pattern that depicted a mighty demon, but Michael couldn't sense any energy from it. The marble sealed the energy within it perfectly.

Tatjana glanced at him for a moment, and Michael responded accordingly. He willed Sun Demos to jump down from the towering tree near Tatjana and approach her slowly. The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King was too eager and crashed down in front of Tatjana.

The Forest Elf was startled and nearly dropped the marble, but Sun Demos reacted fast. His hand lunged forward to reach for the marble. He caught it smoothly and stared eagerly at the marble. However, instead of consuming it immediately, he glanced back at Michael.

[Can I?]

Sun Demos sounded almost desperate as he pleaded with Michael for permission. Michael couldn't even finish gesturing his approval before Sun Demos threw the marble into his mouth. He swallowed it right away as if fearing that Michael would take it away.

"His first evolution won't change too much about his appearance. It strengthens his blood and removes his racial limit. You can consider it a necessary precaution to strengthen his foundation for the next evolution," Tatjana explained to Michael and Sun Demos. Sun Demos, however, wasn't listening anymore.

"He will hibernate for a few days. One thousand Lesser Energy Stones should be enough for him to break past his racial limit. That will be the beginning of a 'new' path. Sun Demos will have to trot a path that has only been walked on by one more being. The obstacles obstructing his path will be numerous, probably even more than his. But with danger and difficulties come rewards and opportunities. I can sense that Sun Demos will be fine. Just trust him!"

Tatjana was more confident than ever. Awakened the Eye of

Evolution was indeed the best that could have happened to her - and Michael. It wasn't unlikely that a Soultrait similar to the Eye of Evolution existed somewhere. Still, Michael figured that it would be incredibly difficult to find another user of such a Soultrait. There might only be a few throughout the Universe. How low was the probability of him finding that Awakened?

It was low...too low. Michael didn't want Sun Demos and the other monsters in his territory to suffer. He was not ready to leave them behind.

Sun Demos turned to Michael and laughed menacingly. Michael rolled his eyes and motioned his companion to leave. There was no need for Sun Demos to stay here. The Blood Oath Demon Monkey King was in need of silence and a massive amount of energy stones. Sun Demos continued gackling like

he lost his sanity and disappeared. He leaped on a low-hanging branch and vanished in the Untamed Jungle. His subordinates stayed behind. Their eyes lingered on Tatjana before they moved toward Michael. The pleading eyes drilled deep into Michael's soul.

"There is no need to worry," Tatjana said before Michael could say anything. "Your Evolution Paths are different, but that doesn't mean I-or rather our Lord-didn't prepare anything for you guys. The spatial satchel has more than enough resources to stimulate your evolutions-for all of you!"

The Blood Oath Demon Monkeys lost their cool when they heard what Tatjana said. They jumped around and issued various incomprehensible noises. Michael was not sure what they said, but he felt pretty good. He imagined that they praised him to the moon and beyond.

Tatjana retrieved a cauldron alongside tens of materials required to evolve the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys. There were hundreds, almost a thousand, Blood Oath Demon Monkeys at this point. Creating a single pill for everyone would take days. Neither Tatjana nor Michael wanted to work that long. Therefore, a different method had to come into place.

Michael didn't pay much attention to Tatjana. Instead, he called the Master Alchemist to aid Tatjana as she started the concoction process. His attention drifted to the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys before the Golden Stinger Bee landed on his right shoulder. Stinger hummed gently and rubbed his face against Michael's cheek before turning quiet.

"I know that you're excited as well. Your turn will come as well. I prepared the best resources for you!"

Chapter 710 Evolutions & Research

The Evolution Paths chosen for the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys were a little bit different from Sun Demos' Evolution Path.

Some Demon Monkeys grew in size as they evolved. They lost their Blood Oath powers and transformed into Herculean Demon Monkeys. Their firm muscles allowed them to dash through the Untamed Jungle and tear their opponents apart with brute force.¹ Other Blood Oath Demon Monkeys evolved into Nightshade Monkeys. They didn't change much in size, but their physique was altered. Their bodies and muscles were more flexible than before. Their perception and agility increased the most. However, the most apparent change was the ability to move through shadows.

The Nightshade Monkeys acquired the Racial Ability to move through shadows. The distance they could travel was not huge, but it was more than enough for them to transform into mighty assassins. As long as they fought in the shade of the Untamed Jungle, they would be near-invincible.

Interestingly enough, the Herculean Demon Monkeys and the Nightshade Monkeys were the most 'ordinary' Evolution Paths discovered by Tatjana. She found several Blood Oath Demon Monkeys with Rare Evolution Paths.

One of those Rare Evolution Paths was the Alpha Blood Monkey Evolution Path. The Blood Oath Demon Monkeys' physical strength increased a little bit upon evolving into Alpha Blood Monkeys, but that was not the important point. The Alpha Blood Monkeys' most interesting factor was the evolution of the Blood Oath's power. Alpha Blood Monkeys had incredibly strong regenerative powers. They could regrow limbs and regenerate lethal wounds within seconds until their accumulated nutrition and energy were sucked dry.

The Alpha Blood Monkeys could transform into the Monkey Unit's vanguards. They could suffer most injuries and continue fighting as if nothing happened, which was something Michael needed in the Monkey Unit. Combining the combat prowess of the Nightshade Monkeys with the Alpha Blood Monkeys created a near-perfect duo.

It was similar to the Herculean Demon Monkey and the Demonic Seal Monkeys, the most unique Rare Evolution Path Tatjana had ever seen. The Demonic Seal Monkeys could cast a Demonic Seal on themselves or someone else. Once unleashed, the Demonic Seal shrouded the target in a dark hue. A considerable percentage would amplify their physical traits, and they would go berserk, unraveling their hidden potential. The Demonic Seal Monkeys had different types of Seals that cost a different amount of energy to perform. Herculean Demon Monkeys were the perfect target for the Demonic Seals. The Demonic Seal's efficiency was the highest when applied to the Herculean Demon Monkeys. That created a second pairing for future battles.

Michael's heart beat wildly as he imagined Sun Demos leading the Monkey Unit into battle. The Blood Oath Demon Monkeys suffered a lot in the last few battles. They had long since reached their racial limit and had been unable to break past it. At last, they evolved and became stronger than they could fathom. Instinctively, they knew they could grow stronger if they stayed by Michael's side. He would help them grow stronger and evolve as long as they protected Michael and his territory.

It hadn't been long since Michael performed the Links of Loyalty with the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys because they were Sun Demos' subordinates. Michael didn't wish to remove Sun Demos' subordinates

with the Link of Loyalty. However, Sun Demos didn't care. He was fine as long as only Michael controlled his Monkey Unit.

Michael sensed the changes in the Blood Oath Demon Monkeys as they consumed the liquid prepared by Tatjana and the Master Alchemist. The different liquids prepared for every Evolution Path didn't immediately trigger the evolution. However, the cells in their bodies were stimulated right away.

Their evolutions would commence in no time.

The Blood Oath Demon Monkeys were given a small storage device with Nutrition Solutions and Energy Stones before disappearing into the Untamed Jungle. Michael watched them disappear and excitedly caressed Stinger as the Golden Stinger Bee moved around.

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"It's not your turn yet. The Heavy Armored Elephants and the Greater Eagles arrived before you," Michael said lightly, but Stinger didn't want that. Stinger was done waiting.

"Okay, okay. We can squeeze your evolution in between," He chuckled as Stinger lost his cool.

Michael glanced at Tatjana and gestured to Stinger, who had teleported before Tatjana and had taken her by surprise. Tatjana understood immediately. She prepared the materials for Stinger's evolution with the Master Alchemist's aid and fed the Golden Stinger Bee a small pill with a honey texture. It looked just like honey as well.

Stinger consumed the pill. However, contrary to previous evolutions, a sudden change occurred immediately. Stinger issued a pained hum suddenly before honey burst out all over its body. The surrounding energy, along with the energy accumulated within 1,000 Inferior Energy Stones, was drained instantaneously. The energy merged with the coat of honey as it expanded, forming a cocoon around the Golden Stinger Bee.

Michael's eyes narrowed as he worried about Stinger's well-being. However, Stinger was fine. Their Link of Loyalty didn't indicate any issues. Stinger was just a little bit startled.

He sighed in relief and was about to approach the levitating honey cocoon when he noticed a small flock of Forest Pixies shot through the forest. They brushed past Michael and circled the honey cocoon. The Forest Pixies laughed happily and released a strand of green mist from their fingers. The green mist formed into tendrils that coiled around the honey cocoon.

Their attention was briefly pulled to Michael, but they didn't pay much attention to him. They happily left the small clearing with the honey cocoon in their grasp.

"I didn't take that into consideration. That might be useful," Tatjana murmured, glued on the Forest Pixies.

"What do you mean?" Michael asked.

Tatjana grinned at Michael, "You're fortunate."

Michael wasn't sure about that, but he figured Tatjana was unwilling to say anything else. Fortunately, he had Spirit Eyes to reveal some of the information Tatjana hid.

"The Forest Pixies drag Stinger to the Greater Nature Spirit. Will that influence his evolution? Maybe. Otherwise, Tatjana wouldn't act like this!

Michael smiled lightly, diverted his attention to the remaining monsters, and observed them as their evolutions began.

The Heavy Armored Elephant and the Greater Eagles were the next ones to receive an evolution. They followed that, and the last two groups of monsters were also granted the opportunity to evolve. The Lesser Elementals desired to develop into ordinary Elementals, whereas the Bilrox hoped to grow into stronger beings. The Bilrox Queen's presence had already stimulated specific mutations within the Bilrox, but that was not enough for them.

The Bilrox wanted more, just like the Lesser Elementals and the other monsters in Michael's territory.

Initiating their evolution was not that difficult. Thanks to the Bilrox Queen, they met most conditions to evolve, and it didn't require many materials to initiate one of their few Evolution Paths.

Michael was curious about their evolution paths. He asked Tatjana various questions, but even the young Forest Elf couldn't answer everything. That was a little disappointing, but it wasn't the first time Michael's questions had remained unanswered. He was known for his bombardment of questions.

"Most evolutions will be completed in a few days. You don't have to be anxious about their well-being either. Except for Sun Demos' evolution, everyone else will survive with a 99% probability." Tatjana explained, easing Michael's worries.

He nodded his head subtly and decided to move onward. Since he couldn't change anything first, Michael might as well distract himself with work, work, and even more work.

Michael went to the Underground Forging Hall, where he retrieved a small fortune of high-quality blueprints, materials with which they could upgrade their Grandmaster Smithies, and a wide variety of Tool Artifacts - specific Artifacts that could be soulbound to Summons. The Tool Artifacts were expensive, but their utility was enormous. As long as they were bound to suitable Summons, Tool Artifacts would develop Innate Abilities that were highly compatible with the Summon's nature.

Michael had some Summons in mind when he purchased the Tool Artifacts. He was fully aware of the abilities that could form from some Tool Artifacts, which is why he made sure that the right owner would obtain them.

The Blacksmith Summons thanked him from the bottom of their hearts for the Tool Artifacts. Some were so thankful that they embraced Michael, tight and warm. Of course, the Blacksmiths weren't the cleanest after working several hours in the

Underground Forging Hall in front of their Grandmaster Smithy, but Michael didn't mind that. It wasn't the first time that he was dirty.

Michael ignored the dirt all over his clothes and inspected the Blacksmiths instead. Compared to a year ago, the Blacksmiths had improved a lot. They used Fire Elemental Crystals to purify the metal ingots and received constant help from Fire Elementals and some Pyro Bilrox who could regulate the fires'

temperature perfectly. Their combined effort and the high-quality forge and tools were more than enough to create high-quality weapons and armor.

The Weaponsmiths managed to create weapons that rivaled the quality of Rare Artifacts. They only missed special engravings, turning ordinary weapons into Artificial Artifacts. However, instead of creating Artifacts, Michael hoped that the blacksmiths would focus on the quality of their work. Artifacts might be worth a lot, but Summons couldn't use them...yet.

The Blacksmiths' research with the Relic of Draka underwent massive changes. They had a breakthrough and retrieved some of the Relic's methods to create Spirit Armaments. The portion was not enough to recreate the whole technique, but it was a good start to experiment with creating Spirit Armaments.

Once Michael's Blacksmiths created their own Spirit Armor, it would be possible to equip the Untamed Army with Armor that boosted the Summons' properties like Artifacts.

Michael looked forward to their research. He was curious enough to deploy Rebecca Zauber to accelerate their research.

The Spirit Armament creation method was worth it, after all.