

## U. Warlord 1001

Chapter 1001: Believe in Him

As the pitch-black storm grew fiercer, the air around the battlefield turned dark, and the two flagships were being drawn into the whirlpool. Even Nightdemon and Wilbow were unsteady on their feet.

Fortunately, the allied forces had already evacuated, or they too would have been sucked into the mess.

The black spirits, so numerous they looked like ants, were torn and shredded apart by the force of the whirlpool.

Shielded by a truly massive quantity of the world's energy, the death spirit king survived the otherwise deadly impact. His spiritflame shield grew even dimmer, reduced in quantity and quality.

"Keep going!" The death spirit king charged forward once again.

As though he just understood something, Nightdemon called out, "Be careful! The death spirit king is making use of your blows to digest the wills of the world!"

Zhang Lie jumped back in shock, trying to cancel his attack and dodge the death spirit king's punch instead.

Wilbow blinked. "Is the death spirit king that intense...?"

Nightdemon sighed. "He's trying to make use of external strength to do what he can't accomplish by himself."

Zhang Lie recalled how the death spirit king hadn't seemed to grow even slightly weaker despite the force of the impacts he had suffered.

The death spirit king scowled. "I was just moments from succeeding! None but the primordial chaos would have seen through my plan so easily..."

Although it looked like he was merely getting beaten by Zhang Lie, he was actually taking advantage of Zhang Lie's strength to suppress his own and increase the speed at which he would be able to digest the wills of the world that were stubbornly resisting him.

The death spirit king continued, "Primordial chaos, even if you saw through what I was doing, you shouldn't have revealed it! You've made everything far more boring now!"

The death spirit king was truly daring to be attempting such a feat during a battle to the death.

He snorted, "And so what if you know what I'm up to? It's hardly as though you can stop me. If you keep trying to dodge, then I'll attack and kill you."

Zhang Lie's eyes glimmered with rainbow light. Rainbow fog shrouded him, as though he were a dream, an illusion. Spiritual energy from two lives surged forth as his body glowed with a layer of white light.

Wilbow cried out, "What's Zhang Lie doing? He knows that his attacks are only going to strengthen the death spirit king! If the death spirit king goes back to normal, he's going to be a huge threat... Is this fellow going to betray us and join the death spirit king instead?!"

Nightdemon, sensing the nature of Zhang Lie's attack, smiled in admiration. "Believe in him. There's a reason he's doing what he is!"

"[Second Form: Piercing the Soul]!" Zhang Lie's disaster-grade mistmeld clam soulshard activated as he infused its energy into his swords, causing them to shine radiantly with multicolored light.

He activated the dragon's eye soulshard that Zhang Hanxiang returned to him, causing his pupils to turn pale white as he looked directly toward the death spirit king's soul. It was wrapped around dozens of multicolored soul fragments, as though it were the base for some sort of pudding.

These multicolored soul fragments were likely from the various wills of the world that the death spirit king had consumed. Those soul fragments were embedded throughout the death spirit king's souls to continuously strengthen it.

The death spirit king's soul was the most unusual soul that Zhang Lie had ever seen.

While in the third realm, he had seen the superior king Feitian's soul and those of many aliens besides, but no soul was as unusual as the death spirit king's.

It was like a bundle of black sand, seeming to be on the verge of collapse at any moment, but somehow unusually strong despite that.

Countless soul fragments from various wills of the world patched it together and kept it held firm. On the outskirts were various wills of the world trying to break away from its grasp, as though they were about to tear the death spirit king's soul into pieces.

A rainbow arc accompanied Zhang Lie's slash, as though an aurora were visible in the sky. It shone in all the colors of the rainbow, momentarily hypnotizing anyone who looked at it.

With Guicang in hand, Zhang Lie flew through the heavens. His sword shone as brightly as the auroras overhead, bringing him momentarily out of the physical into the intangible.

The disaster-grade mistmeld clam soulshard, when incorporated into Zhang Lie's soul-targeting attack, had the ability to target and corrupt its opponents' souls.

As the rainbow light swirled, Nightdemon, Wilbow, and the death spirit king found themselves momentarily stunned. Zhang Lie took advantage of the minute opening to strike, slashing down with his rainbow blade.

"Haha, your attack won't be able to kill me—it'll only make me stronger!" The death spirit king chose not to block or dodge the blow. He stood still, laughing madly, as the slash landed.

Rather than the desired strengthening effect, however, the death spirit king felt a sharp, stabbing pain as the blade pierced through his soul. A tremor of pain vibrated from deep within him. He gasped in surprise. "What sort of attack was that?!"

Zhang Lie attacked not the death spirit king's body, but instead his soul.

However, even his [Second Form: Piercing the Soul] didn't achieve the desired result. All the death spirit king felt was a sharp pain. The many soul fragments of the wills of the world embedded in his soul protected him from the worst of the attack.

Zhang Lie's attack had only injured the soul rather than slashed it apart.

"As expected, he'll be difficult to kill..."

It was ironic that the wills of the world, that were trying to tear the death spirit king apart from within, were simultaneously protecting him from the worst of Zhang Lie's assault.

If [Second Form: Piercing the Soul] were insufficient, then he would use a stronger attack instead.

"[Ninecarp Transformation]!" The sky turned red as red scales covered up Zhang Lie's body like a plate of armor.

What looked like scarlet flames surrounded Zhang Lie, but it was actually steaming, blood-red water-attuned genetic energy. A black sun rose behind his back, and a blood moon shone at his feet.

A long tail grew out of his back. His black hair took on a red tint, as though they were lit up by an inner fire. Interlocking rings of black and red that warped natural law surrounded his body, and a domineering aura exuded from him.

As the moisture in the air vaporized, black smoke roiled into the heavens. The blood-red 'flames' that surrounded him looked like a coiled dragon.

"[Blades, Extinguish]!" Guicang gleamed brightly in Zhang Lie's hands as he infused more and more spiritual energy into it, causing it to flare as it reached a critical threshold.

From the surface of his spiritual sea came waves surging forward, sounding like peals of thunder, like stampeding hooves.

Zhang Lie's spiritual sea expanded greatly, past the confines of his own body. As the mistmeld clam soulshard's energy was infused within the blade, it began glowing with multicolored light, simultaneously illusory and real.

The mysterious and phantasmagorical light stunned and captivated everyone in sight.

The sword in Zhang Lie's hands burned with scarlet water-attuned genetic energy. Billowing clouds of red-tinted steam surrounded him as though he were a burning pyre...

Chapter 1002: Truly, Thank You

The high-temperature steam was so hot that it vaporized much of the blood-colored water-attuned genetic energy. The dark clouds all over the world of black rain began to burn, and the moisture in the air vaporized near-immediately.

The allied forces could feel the steadily increasing heat. Sweat dripped down their backs. Zhang Hanxiang emanated an aura of frost, trying to retain some moisture in the air, before the allied forces fainted from heatstroke.

This domain of scarlet steam was so dangerous that an ordinary lifeform would likely be vaporized without a trace.

The decaying king, who was still nailed to the ground, moaned piteously. He had been able to handle the aftermath of Zhang Lie and the death spirit king's attacks, but what Zhang Lie was doing now was far too frightening.

Even before the attack was released in earnest, the decaying king was already being scorched by the ridiculously high temperature.

The death spirit king's mouth twitched. He felt an ominous portent of danger from his soul and body, stronger than anything he had felt to date.

Even so, his eyes burned with excitement and ambition. If he were able to defend against this blow, all his problems would be resolved immediately.

The temperature around Zhang Lie grew so hot that his surroundings began to warp. Mirages formed all around him.

One of Zhang Lie's blades glowed with radiant light; the other shone scarlet with water-attuned genetic energy.

He combined them both for a devastating effect. The spiritual, metaphysical sea combined with the scarlet steam that hung around Zhang Lie, half the attack in the boundary between the real and the illusory, and the other half in illusory-warping reality.

The attack was so strong that it could distort the very fabric of reality itself.

The two halves of the attack clashed with each other.

The spiritual sea began to burn, as though it had been ignited by the scarlet steam, forming spiritual flame. The scarlet steam, bolstered by the spiritual sea, grew even hotter.

Contact with the steam seemed to sap at one's very soul.

Zhang Lie had allowed these two disparate sources of energy to combine, and their merger was so intense that the distinction between the real and illusory began to blur.

The surface of the sea frothed with angry waves, like dragons emerging with the tide. The waves roared through the sea like galloping steeds, like thundering dragons.

From afar, the waves looked like a coven of flaming phoenixes spreading their wings and taking flight; from close up, they looked like flaming dragons.

These manifestations all drew from Zhang Lie's immense spiritual and genetic energy reserves, along with the sword techniques and willpower that he had honed over countless battlefields.

The spiritual sea seemed to belong to a separate dimension altogether, whereas the scarlet water-attuned genetic energy was in Zhang Lie's current dimension.

The two sources of energy were linked and made manifest by Zhang Lie, and they both surged forward as Zhang Lie swung his twin blades.

The two blades combined spiritual and genetic energy, willpower and time. All that melded into a tsunami which surged toward the death spirit king's prone body.

The combination of these disparate energies was so potent that it could destroy any lifeform's body and soul.

The death spirit king's eyes widened in alarm. He was trying to make use of Zhang Lie's attack to refine his body and help him digest the remaining lumps of wills of the world, not to commit suicide.

The death spirit king realized that he was in danger. He had never expected that Zhang Lie would possess a spiritual attack, nor that it would be so strong.

The combination attack was at ridiculous levels of strength on both the spiritual and physical level. One alone was a problem; both, combined, would be more than sufficient to kill the death spirit king.

Around the vortex of reality and illusion, the scarlet sea and spiritual sea spun around each other, forming a massive tsunami that shook the entire world.

The death spirit king roared. He pushed the world's energy he commanded to the limit, until they burned like scorching suns, transforming into power that would cause the universe to tremble.

The multicolored sun was sucked into the tsunami at the intersection of reality and illusion. The world of black rain quaked. The ground cracked into large pieces, and the world began to fragment.

The tsunami suppressed the multicolored sun, unraveling it bit by bit. The death spirit king screamed as he was caught up in the tsunami, which dissolved his attack and the world's energy that shielded him.

Zhang Lie sheathed his blades and calmed the fiery-red water-attuned genetic energy that continued to pulse from his body.

The temperature of the world of black rain dropped. Where the whirlpool had been was a deep hole, one so deep the abyss seemed to reach out.

From Zhang Lie's perspective, the battle was over—but just then, multicolored flames poured out of the abyssal hole. Zhang Lie grew alarmed as a pillar of radiant energy shot into the air. Zhang Lie stepped back and scrambled for shelter as the figure clad in rainbow light stopped short in the air, standing proudly with his chest puffed out. To Zhang Lie's eyes, that was an existence comparable to a devil.

"Hahaha, thank you, I'm very thankful indeed! Your strength has helped my rebirth tremendously!" The death spirit king glanced arrogantly down at the world of black rain, a layer of lustrous, radiant armor around his body.

After successfully surviving Zhang Lie's [Blades, Extinguish], his soul had been perfectly reforged.

The death spirit king laughed. "Haha, I was only able to merge perfectly with the will of the world because of you. I had been mistaken—even if I were to borrow your strength, all I would be able to digest was the world's energy. However, I never digested the true form of these wills—the soul fragments that were embedded in my soul. That only happened because of your attack."

Zhang Lie activated his dragon's pupils and scanned the death spirit king's soul carefully. It had changed in a remarkably strange and eerie fashion.

[Blades, Extinguish] had chopped up the death spirit king's soul and combined it with the various fragments of the wills of the world.

The death spirit king shouted excitedly, "I thought I would be able to deal with the impurities in my soul by burning these soul fragments of the wills of the world, but I realized I was mistaken when your attack cut my soul apart.

The more wills I devoured, the greater the side effects I had to suffer. If I continued devouring the wills of the world, I would eventually have exploded from their combined effects."

The death spirit king's sinister path to power came with consequences, which had been steadily accumulating in his body.

"However, they're all gone now! Truly, thank you," the death spirit king repeated...

### Chapter 1003: I Am Not Me

From the perspective of Zhang Lie's draconic vision, the death spirit king's soul was entirely different. The form of its soul had been unusual to begin with: a lump of black sand mushed with pudding.

Now, the death spirit king's soul was like the slurry that was produced by blending a large number of fruits together, then adding a layer of mud over it.

All he could see with his eyes was a pile of squirming fluid. He didn't even know if it could be considered a soul any longer.

The death spirit king announced proudly, "Thank you for chopping up my soul and allowing it to combine with the remnant soul fragments of the wills of the world embedded in my soul!

From now on, I'm simultaneously the death spirit king and the will of the world, the strongest existence in the third realm!"

Zhang Lie asked, "Who are you?"

The death spirit king narrowed his eyes. "What do you mean? Have you been so scared by my reappearance that you can't think straight?"

"Who are you?" Zhang Lie asked again.

Zhang Lie really was a little scared—bodies and appearances could be manipulated at will, but not souls. However, the soul of the death spirit king in front of him had been mutilated and permanently transformed.

The 'death spirit king' replied, "As I've said, I'm the death spirit king!"

Zhang Lie countered, "Are you really the death spirit king?"

The 'death spirit king' replied, spreading his arms, "Who else could I be?"

"The death spirit king perished in that attack. You may have revived in the death spirit king's old body, but you're not the death spirit king. You've simply taken over his name and body. What are you?"

The reason the 'death spirit king' believed he was the death spirit king was because the wills of the world had no sense of ego; only the death spirit king's original soul did. As a result, the revived 'death spirit king' believed himself to be the actual death spirit king.

In some sense, it wasn't wrong, but that was hardly the full story. It was an existence similar to the death spirit king but different from it.

The 'death spirit king' frowned. "Laughable. Who else could I be?"

Nightdemon exhaled in relief. "I thought that Zhang Lie had produced something crazy, but it looks as though digesting all those wills of the world required a commensurate price."

The bundle of souls that comprised the 'death spirit king' began to vibrate.

The 'death spirit king' cried out, "If I'm not the death spirit king, then who am I?!"

Zhang Lie replied, "I think you'd know better than I do just what you are. You can sense it, can't you?"

Zhang Lie's words seemed to penetrate the 'death spirit king' deeply, causing his emotions and strength to go out of control. Rainbow light flickered and dimmed. "Of course I know what I am! I've been rebirthed—it's obvious that I would be different from before."

"Different from before, you say?" Rainbow light shot out of the 'death spirit king'. "Don't try to confuse me. I'll kill you! With this reborn body, I can surely do it."

Zhang Lie commented, "You're simply trying to prove yourself, to demonstrate that you're stronger than the past death spirit king, that you've surpassed yourself."

"What do you mean, the 'past' death spirit king? I'm the death spirit king, I'm myself!" the 'death spirit king' howled, transforming into the brightest object on the world of black rain.

Zhang Lie shook his head. "No, you can't do it."

The 'death spirit king' roared in outrage, "Now that the issues with my body have been fixed, I'm the supreme existence of the realm! Even the primordial chaos wouldn't be able to do anything against me."

Zhang Lie's expression remained calm as scarlet steaming water-attuned genetic energy exploded from him like a volcanic eruption.

"[Ninesoul Dragonblade—Third Form: Separating Earth and Sky]!" White light split the sea and the sky, cutting apart the horizon. The skies split; the black- and white-colored energy that went into the slash erupted like a volcano. White energy drifted toward the skies, and black energy caused the sea to quake.

As the two shades of energy combined, everything in sight was destroyed. A patch of void and chaos expanded where the horizon had been, tearing apart the world of black rain.

The world seemed to quail when faced with such a devastating blow.

The defensive barrier formed by the world's energy was incapable of handling an attack of such magnitude. Zhang Lie easily penetrated the barrier, bisecting the 'death spirit king' at the waist. The two halves of his body fell from the sky.

Zhang Lie sheathed his blade and reined in his genetic energy. "As I've said, that's impossible."

The 'death spirit king' cried in shock, "How could you be so strong? Even my ascended form is no match for you!"

Zhang Lie explained, "Regardless of whether you truly 'ascended', you haven't grown stronger."

"How could that be?!"

"Haven't you noticed?"

"Noticed what?"

"The world's energy within your body has grown weaker."

The 'death spirit king' froze. After Zhang Lie pointed it out, the 'death spirit king' did notice that his reservoir of world's energy had grown considerably weaker.

Zhang Lie shrugged. "You might have resolved the problem plaguing your body, but you've also lowered the quality of the world's energy in your body by at least three levels."

The death spirit king's original plan was to reforge the world's energy he possessed while in battle with Zhang Lie, and to digest the remaining stubborn lumps of the wills that were embedded in his soul.

The resulting world's energy would diminish greatly in quantity, but improve by leaps and bounds in quality.

However, Zhang Lie had destroyed the death spirit king's plan. His attacks were far stronger than the death spirit king had anticipated.

Although he had successfully made use of Zhang Lie's [Blades, Extinguish] to absorb the wills of the world into his soul, the creature that had been rebirthed into the death spirit king's body was no longer the death spirit king, but rather an entity that had his memories and some semblance of consciousness.

It wouldn't be inaccurate to call it a new death spirit king.

Zhang Lie continued, "If the original death spirit king were the one to command this body, despite the reduction in quality of the world's energy, his reformed body would be more than sufficient to counteract that loss. The problem is that you're no longer the death spirit king, but rather a new existence birthed from the death spirit king's soul—and combined with the fragments of the wills of the world."

The 'death spirit king' immediately denied Zhang Lie's assertion. "No, I'm the death spirit king!"

Zhang Lie shook his head. "You might have inherited part of his memories—perhaps shattered fragments thereof—but you don't have the combat instincts that he honed over millennia. As a result, your combat strength has weakened dramatically!"

The 'death spirit king', who had affirmed his identity once and again, began to believe Zhang Lie for the first time. Who am I...?

## Chapter 1004: Self-Doubt

If this new death spirit king had time to acclimatize to his body, he would surely grow even stronger than the previous one. Nor would he be shaken by Zhang Lie's words, but the 'death spirit king', having just undergone a rebirth, was currently in an immature state.

Zhang Lie had to take advantage of this opportunity to kill him right here, or he would surely continue his plan of trying to devour the three thousand worlds given his belief that he was the death spirit king.

At that point, with the wills of the world perfectly melding into his wretched soul, along with the death spirit king's ambitions, he would surely become an existence to contend with.

Zhang Lie sucked in a deep breath. No matter what, he had to kill this 'death spirit king' in the cradle.

The 'death spirit king' cried out again, "I'm the death spirit king, regardless of what you claim! This will never change."

The soul of the 'death spirit king' quavered as Zhang Lie shook his head. "The death spirit king was a majestic existence. Although I only knew him for a short period of time, I have to admit that he's an opponent worthy of respect.

"I know you want to become such an existence too, but you aren't. The death spirit king certainly wouldn't insist that he was the death spirit king—he'd reply that his name didn't matter, just his strength."

Nightdemon shook his head. "From what I know of the death spirit king, that's not right. What he would really say is, 'The title of 'death spirit king' is no longer suitable for my rebirthed self. From today onwards, I am the death spirit god! Only the title of god suits a being like me!' "

The soul of the 'death spirit king' began shaking even more violently, and the world's energy it commanded began to flicker.

Zhang Lie spread his arms. "That's why I'm telling you that you're not the death spirit king, but rather a counterfeit wearing his body and face!"

Nightdemon shook his head. "The death spirit king I knew was far bolder and far more charismatic. You can't compare to him."

Zhang Lie and Nightdemon glanced at each other, each understanding what the other was doing.

The 'death spirit king' had just been rebirthed, and they couldn't let it establish its self-awareness. The first step against that was essentially to gaslight its very existence.

"No, I'm the death spirit king..." The 'death spirit king' clutched his head in pain. "I am, I am the death spirit king...!"

The 'death spirit king' seemed to be trying to convince himself of that fact.

"I possess the death spirit king's memories."

"Those memories are just remnants of his soul."

"My body is the death spirit king's."

"I've simply taken over his shell."

"I'm not the rebirthed death spirit king, but rather a shoddy imitation."

"If I'm not the death spirit king, what am I?"

The 'death spirit king' murmured to himself, trapped in a cycle of self-affirmation and self-denial. It seemed as though the 'death spirit king' was developing a split personality on the spot.

This was the first time Zhang Lie had seen something like this happening, and to a superior king no less. If he were able to record it and post it on the web, it would surely go viral.

"Who am I? What am I? If not the death spirit king, then..." The soul of the 'death spirit king' finally reached a critical threshold. The souls that had been chopped apart and then forcibly stuck together by Zhang Lie's [Blades, Extinguish] were unstable by nature, and Zhang Lie and Nightdemon had destabilized the amalgamation further with their words. The 'death spirit king' was beginning to disintegrate on a spiritual level.

"If I'm not the death spirit king, then none of this needs to exist."

The 'death spirit king' erupted with the world's energy. The multicolored energy burned like flames, as though the body of the 'death spirit king' was its furnace. Even Zhang Lie had to retreat in the face of those flames.

"He's going to self-destruct!" Zhang Lie called out, then glanced at the death spirit king's actions more carefully. "No, it's self-immolating!"

Nightdemon commented, "As expected of a being who inherited the death spirit king's personality, with ridiculous self-awareness and self-will despite our destabilizing influence."

Wilbow glanced at them curiously. "What's going on?"

Throughout the entire process, he had been stupefied by what Zhang Lie and Nightdemon were doing.

Wouldn't it be best to kill the death spirit king directly? He didn't know what they were trying to accomplish.

Nightdemon spread his arms. "The death spirit king's consciousness has been reborn. Upon realizing that it wasn't the original death spirit king, it's choosing to destroy its body before reforging it anew from its ashes and a large heaping of world's energy. This will be a true rebirth in body and soul."

Wilbow cocked his head. "Has he gone crazy?"

To think of trying such a feat on the battlefield—even if he were to succeed, he would have to face Zhang Lie, Nightdemon, and Wilbow in battle!

Could this newly forged body be so strong as to handle such a fight? Zhang Lie certainly wouldn't allow this to happen, and neither would they. They would have to kill the death spirit king before his body could fully form.

Nightdemon replied, "Either he has absolute confidence in what he's doing, or we've driven him crazy."

Wilbow shook his head. He didn't know what to think of the fact that Zhang Lie and Nightdemon had driven an existence on the level of a superior king crazy with just their words.

He asked what was on his mind. "Why not just kill him?"

Nightdemon sighed. "If only it were so easy."

The death spirit king's body contained great deals of the world's energy. If he were to self-destruct, none of them would be able to escape.

Furthermore, the reborn death spirit king wasn't weak at all. If they were to initiate a battle and allow it to familiarize itself with its body, it might very well kill them all instead.

Most importantly, the reborn death spirit king could choose to run away.

Nightdemon and Zhang Lie had deliberately provoked him with words in hopes that his mental state would crumble and collapse and they could minimize the fighting they had to do.

They were half-successful. The death spirit king's mental state had crumbled, but he hadn't died.

The multicolored flame continued to burn as the death spirit king's body turned to ash. The world of black rain, refined by the flame, morphed into the shell that would be the basis for the death spirit king's new body.

Deep within the multicolored flames, a crystal was slowly forming a core.

Zhang Lie grimaced. The reborn death spirit king, in this furnace-like state, couldn't be struck with his [Fourth Form: Warping Space and Time], and his other attacks would do essentially no damage.

In that case, he had only one final trick left to him: [Fifth Form: Obliterating the Stars]!

Zhang Lie raised Guicang high into the air.

Chapter 1005: All Sorts of Details

Zhang Lie hadn't been able to use this technique in the past, but after obtaining monarch gene fragments, his strength had risen significantly.

As a result, he was finally able to study the fifth form of his [Ninesoul Dragonblade].

The scarlet water-attuned genetic energy rose into the sky like a gigantic dragon of blood soaring toward the heavens. A frightening burst of genetic energy emanated from him. Even before his sword slash landed, the entire world of black rain was shuddering.

The cracks on the ground continued to propagate, faster and faster, as the burst of genetic energy spread out all around Zhang Lie like the tides. The neighboring worlds, possessing far less structural integrity than the world of black rain, burst apart one after the other.

Guicang flashed in Zhang Lie's hands as the neighboring worlds continued to pop. Zhang Lie's slash landed on the multicolored furnace, tearing the ground apart and causing the flames to scatter. Even so, as the sword slash struck the core of the furnace, it was blocked by a layer of energy. Even [Fifth Form: Obliterating the Stars] was insufficient to break through.

The multicolored crystal emanated a potent strength. Despite the fact that the core was still incomplete, the barrier was sufficient to defend against Zhang Lie's strongest attack.

The barrier was composed of huge quantities of the world's energy, purified and refined in a constant cycle. Its quality surpassed that of a superior world's energy, and it wasn't a substance that would ever have naturally occurred in the third realm.

It was so strong that Zhang Lie's attack was incapable of doing anything against it. Zhang Lie infused his attack with all his genetic energy, causing the barrier to crack, but it wasn't enough.

After a long, exhausting battle, Zhang Lie had consumed much of his reservoir of genetic energy. As the core continued to form—just as the newly reborn death spirit king was about to finish forging the heart of its new body—a rainbow beam of light fell from the heavens and struck Zhang Lie.

The will of the third realm itself seemed to be supporting Zhang Lie. As the realm's energy poured into Zhang Lie, his sword began to give off a multicolored glow.

Nightdemon glanced at the decaying king, who was still pinned to the ground, and gave him a meaningful smile.

Zhang Lie's attack, strengthened by the world's energy, broke through the barrier. The huge burst of energy obliterated the ground. The world of black rain, unable to resist the persistent battering, finally broke apart. Chunks of the world crumbled away.

Zhang Lie's attack left a crack in the core, from which a wisp of dark sand poured out.

Nightdemon struck then. He tossed out the Shining Trapezohedron, distorting space into twenty-four faces. Try as it might, the dark sand was unable to fly out of the trapped space. Nightdemon waved a hand, causing the Trapezohedron to contract into a glowing orb that flew back into his hand.

Nightdemon smiled at the dark sand in the orb. "Where are you headed, death spirit king?"

Wilbow asked curiously, "What's going on?"

Nightdemon shrugged. "The death spirit king's trying to flee."

Wilbow frowned. "What?"

Nightdemon explained, "After he realized that he was no match for Zhang Lie, the consciousness of the death spirit king tore its own soul apart and escaped from its newly forged body. If I'm not mistaken, it had been planning this all along."

The ink-black man had, at some point, appeared by Nightdemon and Wilbow's side. "While we were trying to drive the newly reborn death spirit king crazy, he was also trying to take advantage of us."

Wilbow's eyes widened. "You mean that the death spirit king had simply been acting?"

Nightdemon inclined his head. "In a manner of speaking, but also not."

The ink-black man nodded. "We can't exclude this possibility—it's very likely."

Wilbow scowled. "Explain yourselves clearly!"

Nightdemon replied, "Perhaps the newly reborn king did want to reforge its body. If it failed, however, its plan was to escape amidst the resulting chaos, once Zhang Lie relaxed after thinking that he had killed the death spirit king."

Nightdemon shrugged. "Actually, I suspected that the death spirit king was about to do something similar quite early on. After all, his actions haven't been logical. He's been behaving erratically from the beginning."

The ink-black man followed Nightdemon's train of reasoning. "Even if the death spirit king could defeat Zhang Lie, the three of us are still around, and it wouldn't easily be able to escape. He wouldn't gain anything by defeating Zhang Lie, since he'd have to face the rest of us, too. Furthermore, if we drag the battle out, Zhang Lie would recover and join back in, along with the decaying king."

Nightdemon took over. "As such, the death spirit king planned to escape instead, leading to the interesting scene we just observed."

Wilbow asked curiously, "Do the conversations between the two of you count as talking to yourself?"

After all, both the ink-black man and Nightdemon were clones of the king of chaos.

Nightdemon scowled. "Focus on the explanation!"

Wilbow thought about the situation for a moment. "In other words, this newly reborn death spirit king turned out to be exceptionally intelligent—his plan would have been beneficial regardless of whether he were to win or lose the fight against Zhang Lie."

For him to have concocted a plan so quickly, though a plan of rather limited success rate, was testament to his intelligence.

Nightdemon shook his head. "Not just that, I think. The death spirit king was frighteningly intelligent to begin with, and his newly reborn form has inherited that intelligence, after all. He could hardly be less intelligent."

The death spirit king had been the pioneer of science and technology in the third realm, and he had even created these massive flagships.

Nightdemon and Wilbow had taken quite some time and expended a considerable amount of energy to defeat those flagships. If the death spirit king hadn't been so ambitious, or had had a better understanding of the other superior forces' strength, the outcome of this battle could have been completely different.

The ink-black man continued, "I've been observing the newly reborn death spirit king all this time. It looks as though he's been thinking of running away all along, and this new body of his is just something to fool us."

Nightdemon added, "He's been consuming all the world's energy he gathered. Even with a newly forged body, without any world's energy, he wouldn't be able to beat us—so it's clear that the death spirit king had been planning to run away."

Wilbow contemplated these revelations. He was shocked and frightened by the depths of the death spirit king's intellect. "Thank goodness you realized. As expected of a clone of the king of chaos—indeed, the death spirit king has likely been planning this. If he were to escape, we would never be able to find him considering how large the third realm is!"

#### Chapter 1006: Snatching the Reward

Since the newly reborn death spirit king had inherited the original death spirit king's consciousness, he surely wouldn't give up on his ambitions, and he would end up trying to take over the realm once more.

With the death spirit king trapped in the Shining Trapezohedron, the battle was over for the moment.

The world of black rain had been destroyed, having cracked into several pieces. The death spirit king's forces had been destroyed by the aftermath of the fight between Zhang Lie and the death spirit king, leaving only pulverized ground behind.

The allied forces, led by Zhang Hanxiang and Hong Xi, had survived the battle. Zhang Lie, sensing that the allied forces were all safe and sound, smiled in relief.

Zhang Hanxiang and Hong Xi had done well during the battle, and throughout the entire campaign. The only mark against them was that they had been rather rash at the start of the fighting. When they all returned, he would award them each with a vial of Potion #4.

That said, it didn't seem to be a particularly meaningful prize, and his sister would surely call him miserly if that was all he gave them.

Only Zhang Hanxiang would ever say something like that—if word of Potion #4 were to spread, the entire Milky Way would be in an uproar over it.

"I still have some monarch-grade flesh—I suppose it would be a suitable reward too."

The defeated death spirit king left a mostly formed core behind, which was intended to form the heart of his newly forged body.

Zhang Lie had attacked and stalled the forging process before it could be completed, but the world's energy within had already evolved past that of a superior world. Zhang Lie estimated that this might well be the energy of the third realm at large.

The wills of the world that had been consumed by the death spirit king had all been mixed together by Zhang Lie's [Blades, Extinguish].

In some sense, the death spirit king's body was an incomplete form of the third realm. Perhaps this was the nature of fate: separated things would combine, and combined things would separate.

Once the death spirit king consumed all the wills of the world, he might become the will of the third realm itself. At that point, would the will of the world gain the consciousness of the death spirit king, be known as the death spirit king, or have once been the death spirit king?

The newly reborn death spirit king had been quite different from the original death spirit king. In the same fashion, the death spirit king who had combined the wills of all the worlds in the third

realm would be significantly different from his present form. Could he still be considered the death spirit king in that case? No one could say.

It was possible that the death spirit king resulting from such a merger would have no shred of biological desire—no ambition, no humanity, and no interest in absorbing other worlds.

Zhang Lie wasn't going to bet on this possibility, nor the other superior kings, nor the biological lifeforms of the third realm.

Who would be willing to bet three thousand worlds on whether the death spirit king would become the will of the realm or a demon?

The superior kings certainly didn't want to see their position as rulers of the realm threatened.

Regardless of just what the death spirit king would become after swallowing up all those wills, the other superior kings would never allow this to happen. They couldn't countenance the birth of any being stronger than them in the realm.

Zhang Lie picked up the cracked core and looked up at the others. "How should we divide this?"

Wilbow shrugged. "I don't mind. I only came on my father's orders. I heard he owes you a debt?"

"A debt to the Zongming world."

"Then don't dream of my share," Wilbow replied. "The death spirit king consumed all the wills of the world and the world's energy he accumulated. What you hold is the concentrated essence of all that energy and spiritual matter, and it's of incredible value!"

"I suggest dividing the spoils during the superior worlds' meeting to be convened after the battle—but before that, I suggest you get the agreement of what's behind you," Nightdemon suggested.

Zhang Lie sensed danger coming from his back. He whirled around, his sword at the ready.

"[The Boundless Blade: Yawning Wave]!" The scarlet water-attuned genetic energy rose into the sky like an inferno. It lapped forward like a wave, and a blood-colored shark swam forth with the force of the entire ocean behind it.

It tore apart a piece of some black substance as a shrill scream sounded.

Zhang Lie glared at the sneak attacker, only to find that it was the decaying king.

The black mass of the decaying king sizzled where Zhang Lie's sword had cut apart a piece of its flesh.

The decaying king burst apart in an explosion of dark yellow pus, smothering the burning wound and destroying the shark of blood, which released corrosive energy of its own and countered the dark yellow pus.

"Give it to me!" the decaying king screamed shrilly, pouncing toward Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie inhaled deeply. The decaying king's target was the radiant core that Zhang Lie possessed. He understood what was happening now. After all, the decaying king was a superior king in his own right.

Perhaps the death spirit king might be able to pin him down for some time, but the decaying king could, and indeed did, free himself in the midst of the heated battle between Zhang Lie and the death spirit king.

However, it had neither helped Zhang Lie against the death spirit king or Nightdemon and the others against the flagships. Instead, it lay unmoving on the ground, watching the fight between Zhang Lie and the death spirit king as it recovered its strength and waited for an opportunity.

When the death spirit king was killed for the first time, the decaying king had claimed all the world's energy that had burst from its body.

It was also responsible for the surge of world's energy that had helped Zhang Lie during his time of greatest need. Zhang Lie's final blow, [Fifth Form: Obliterating the Stars], was clearly an attack that would destroy the world. The world of black rain viewed Zhang Lie much like the death spirit king, and it was fortunate enough that the world of black rain didn't stop Zhang Lie, let alone help him.

The one who had ended up giving its hard-won world's energy to Zhang Lie wasn't the will of the world of black rain, but rather the decaying king, who had been forced to do so to avoid the revival of the death spirit king.

Chapter 1007: Greed without End

Zhang Lie had overexerted himself, and the core of the newly reborn death spirit king had fallen to the ground. The decaying king thought that this was a good opportunity.

"You destroyed my world during your fight with the death spirit king. The crystalline energy he left behind should be just compensation for my losses!" The decaying king pounced forward.

"You lay there without helping us, and now you're blaming me for destroying your world?" Zhang Lie retrieved a Yeluo restorative from his extradimensional storage.

This Yeluo restorative had the rare and potent ability to stimulate cellular growth, allowing Zhang Lie to recover from his injuries and restoring half his genetic energy. Such a powerful potion had its side effects, of course—after using this potion, because of the drain on his biological resources, huge pain would wrack his body.

Zhang Lie slashed forward with Guicang. A blood-red river of genetic energy manifested around him. "[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!"

As the river arced through the air, it turned blisteringly hot. The temperature rose dramatically, as though a portal to the underworld had opened.

On closer inspection, the river was formed of thousands, tens of thousands, of blood serpents, so numerous as to form what seemed like a fluid whole. Each serpent was a brighter red than blood—they were composed of boiling lava.

With a wave of Zhang Lie's sword, the serpents rained down on the decaying king.

The serpents bit and smashed into the writhing black mass that was the decaying king. A pitch-black skeleton's arm emerged from the mass, tearing apart the serpents.

Pitch-black energy surrounded the arm as it tried to catch Zhang Lie, but Zhang Lie blocked its attack with the blade in one hand. Fire-red genetic energy sprayed out of the blade in the other. "[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!"

The scarlet energy exploded. Nightdemon and Wilbow hurriedly flew back as Zhang Lie transformed into the equivalent of a gigantic demon.

The scarlet genetic energy burned the skies above the world of black rain to a crisp.

As though the fire itself were crazy, it expanded all over, throwing itself to the whims of the wind, devouring everything it touched without fear. The sea of flames spread at an incredible rate, as though it wanted to swallow up the entire sky.

From afar, the flames looked like countless thundering dragons, serpents of blood, demons amidst the flames. As Zhang Lie struck, a fiery river hurtled into existence, transforming whatever it touched into gray ash.

The blood serpents were like thousands of courageous soldiers attacking in force.

In a matter of moments, the decaying king was drowned in the sea of flames. The ground melted, turning into boiling-hot lava.

Serpents of blood continuously rushed out of the sea of flame, tearing, biting, and siphoning the pitch-black energy that composed the decaying king. The decaying king swiped at them with its claws, but after they burst apart, they were easily able to reform by drawing on the energy of the sea of fire.

The decaying king struggled furiously amidst the flame as the pitch-black energy surrounding itself was burnt to a crisp. The decaying king's true form was revealed—a decayed, pitch-black skeleton that had lost one arm, and whose lower body was crushed.

Zhang Lie was very surprised—just what sort of existence had the skeleton been in its life, that even its skeleton could become a superior king in death?

Perhaps the death spirit king had been a fourth-realm hunter, whose body had somehow fallen into the third and eventually, over eons, transformed into the decaying king.

But all this was unimportant now.

"The moment you messed with me, you were fated to die."

The blood dragon's phantasmal figure soared into the air. Zhang Lie thrust forward with Guicang, the gleam of the blade so bright that the world of black rain welcomed a new dawn. The blood dragon melted into the blade. "[The Boundless Blade: Dragon's Wrath]!"

A blood dragon appeared. The blood dragon's howls shook heaven and earth, igniting the flames, morphing into a tyrannical dragon of fire, and piercing through the skull of the decaying king.

The decaying king's skull burst apart as an unknown black substance emerged from it. It was soft and gooey, like brain matter. It fled through the flames and the serpents, thinking to escape.

"I'm right here, you know!" Bright sword energy radiated from Zhang Lie like brilliant rays of sunlight, illuminating the entirety of the world of black rain.

Just as Zhang Lie was about to swing his blade down, Nightdemon suddenly appeared before him.

Zhang Lie scowled. "Scram, or I'll cut you down along with the decaying king!"

Nightdemon smiled gently. "Zhang Lie, calm down. Listen to me."

"You aren't going to ask me to let go of the fool who tried to launch a sneak attack on me for the so-called balance of the third realm, are you?" Zhang Lie snorted. "I don't care for this balance. I'll break it today!"

Nightdemon smirked. "Of course not, Zhang Lie. I'd attack him even if you didn't—but there's no need. He can't get away."

The ink-black man had, at some point, appeared before the decaying king's path, preventing him from escaping.

The decaying king screeched, "King of chaos, we're good friends, aren't we? We've been superior kings for a long time together, haven't we? Let me go, just this once!"

Nightdemon smiled gently. "Since you've been a superior king for so long, you should be well aware of our rules."

The ink-black man continued, "While we were killing the death spirit king and his forces, you launched a sneak attack on one of our number. You're breaking long-established custom."

Nightdemon added, "If I remember correctly, you were one of the superior kings who participated in establishing those laws in the first place. For someone like you to then break those laws—this just won't do."

The ink-black man continued, "According to custom, the spoils of war will be divided in a meeting convened among the superior worlds, but you tried to claim it for yourself. Do you think yourself above us all?"

Nightdemon gave the decaying king a grim, mocking smile. "Many think the superior worlds' rules nothing but a joke, that might makes right—but don't forget that we're all superior worlds! If we don't follow the rules we set out for ourselves, all of us will be doomed. Do you understand?"

Nightdemon and the ink-black man's words weren't just for the decaying king—or rather, it was pointless to be lecturing the decaying king now. Their main purpose was to lecture Zhang Lie, who held the core of the reborn death spirit king, instead...

Chapter 1008: Another Ruckus

The decaying king trembled in fear. "I was mistaken. I was blinded by a moment of greed! Please, let me go this once. I'll be a servant for the king of chaos in the future, please!"

"I don't need a disobedient dog." The ink-black man's voice was curt.

With an ear-splitting screech, the decaying king's pitch-black brain was turned to ash. The ink-black man sucked up the remnants of that ash into his sleeve as the skies rumbled, and a rain of blood fell over the world of black rain.

Zhang Lie sheathed Guicang and Hanguang, asking dubiously, "That wasn't all just an act, was it?"

Nightdemon asked, "What do you mean?"

"Could it be that you haven't killed the decaying king? Could you have hidden it away instead?"

Nightdemon frowned. "Isn't the rain of blood ample proof?"

Zhang Lie countered, "I don't know what powers the strongest king, the king of chaos, possesses. Who's to say that you aren't helping out the decaying king because you're old acquaintances?"

Nightdemon sighed. "If you consider me the strongest king, do you really think I would care about the life of an ordinary superior king?"

Zhang Lie frowned. "That's hard to say. Who knows what you're thinking?"

Nightdemon smiled. "I wouldn't want to ruin the friendship that I've worked hard to develop with you over a rule-breaking superior king."

To Nightdemon, Zhang Lie's friendship was worth that much. It wasn't unreasonable—Zhang Lie had already killed two superior kings to date, and he boasted a strength superior to even an ordinary superior king. He was certainly more valuable.

"Is that so?" Zhang Lie still seemed to harbor some doubts.

Nightdemon waved a hand over the fiery sea, causing a pulsing golden heart to fly into his palm. The golden heart was bruised and cracked, but it still seemed to be full of vitality. A superior world's energy leaked out of its wounds.

"The heart of the world?"

Nightdemon replied, "If you still feel uncomfortable, Zhang Lie, I imagine holding on to this will help."

Zhang Lie frowned. "This is the proof of kingship of the world of black rain, isn't it? Can I really take this?"

Despite the fact that the world of black rain had shattered, that the death spirit king had absorbed much of its energy, that there was no living biological lifeform left on it, it was still a de facto superior world, worth more than even a pristine peak large world.

"You're giving me this just like that?"

Nightdemon shrugged. "I don't particularly care for one or two superior worlds. If I want them all, I could easily take control of eight of the nine—and of course, the last one would be my own."

Zhang Lie's lips twitched. Nightdemon's claim was rather arrogant, but given the surfeit of clones on the level of a superior king he seemed to possess, he probably could do as he claimed.

"Didn't you say that we would have to divide up the spoils evenly during the subsequent meeting?"

Nightdemon rolled his eyes. "That's for the largest prize. Everything else can be divided on the spot—if we leave everything to be distributed at the end, no one would be motivated to fight."

Indeed, anyone who fought would be able to claim spoils on the battlefield directly. This would be significant incentive for the forces that each king supplied.

The ink-black man grumbled, "If we really were to divide everything, there'd be far too much to deal with."

Zhang Lie sighed as he looked at the vibrating golden heart in his palm.

The decaying king was no hero, but it had been among the top existences of all three thousand worlds. A moment's mistake, however, had doomed it for eternity.

The decaying king was greedy, but what could it do? The death spirit king had stolen much of its world's energy, and its world was at death's door. If it wanted to revive it, it would have to claim the death spirit king's spoils for itself.

If it could swallow all that world's energy, whose quality went beyond that of a superior world, it might even be able to grow as strong as the king of chaos—but in the end, it had failed.

Zhang Lie kept the golden heart he was handed. He didn't have a use for it, but Li Zongming likely would. "It's time to explain to me what you were all talking about."

Nightdemon asked, "What do you mean?"

"About the doors that you mentioned."

Nightdemon blinked. "Ah, those."

"Can you describe these doors in detail?"

Nightdemon shrugged. "It's no secret. These doors are an easy way to categorize the strength of the various superior kings. Generally, those who ascend to the level of a superior king can sense their path forward in their mind. If you can vaguely sense the existence of a door, you're at the threshold."

The ink-black man picked up the explanation. "The next step is to push open that door. Currently, in the third realm, the only one we know of that has done so is the king of keys. The step beyond that is to step through the door. The death spirit king had just about reached this stage by consuming all these wills of the world and digesting them."

Zhang Lie pondered this information.

In terms of the genes and gene fragments that the hunters of the Milky Way possessed, maxing out disaster gene fragments was likely equivalent to touching the door, or perhaps somewhat beyond that.

In that case, the peak limit breakthrough would correspond more closely to reaching the level of a superior king, and obtaining monarch gene fragments to pushing open the door. The process of acquiring more monarch gene fragments would be akin to stepping through it, and the stage beyond that would be maxing out monarch gene fragments.

The ink-black man asked curiously, "As far as I'm aware, you've already pushed open the door, and you might even have stepped through it. Are you not aware of such things?"

Zhang Lie shrugged. "We of the Milky Way follow a different path."

"What path?" Nightdemon asked.

"Genes—the door to life, I suppose."

"Aliens truly are mysterious, aren't they?"

Zhang Lie asked, "What stage is the king of chaos at?"

"Guess," Nightdemon replied with a mysterious smile.

Just as they were chatting, they suddenly sensed a disturbance from afar. Nightdemon turned toward the direction of the draconian world, licking his lips.

"Interesting. Two worlds are evolving to superior worlds right this moment."

Zhang Lie groaned. "At this time...?" Why hadn't they evolved earlier? The war was already over!

#### Chapter 1009: The World's Evolution

Zhang Lie had guessed the identity of the two worlds that had just advanced.

Nightdemon smirked. "Both worlds seem to be close to the Zongming world, and I expect they're within the Zongming world's jurisdiction. What are your plans—will you consume them?"

Zhang Lie smiled in response. "You must be joking, king of chaos. There's nothing that can be hidden from you among the three thousand worlds. Haven't you assigned a clone to the Zongming world?"

Nightdemon smiled. "Ha! I would need strong incentive to dare to pry into your affairs."

Back in the draconian world, the draconian sage walked up to a mountain of proofs of kingship.

"Zhang Lie said that we should begin to merge the worlds and evolve into a superior world once the fighting between the death spirits and the allied forces grew to its most intense."

The draconian sage hadn't expected that the allied forces had just finished fighting against the death spirits, that Zhang Lie had swept through the strongest of their forces and ended the war. This wasn't the most intense period of fighting; the fighting had just finished.

The draconian sage, who was unaware of all this, reverted to his draconic form. He soared through the air and circled the mountain of proofs of kingship from above. As he infused the world's energy into that mountain, the proof of kingship of the draconian world appeared, shining with multicolored light.

The light struck the mountain, causing the gathered proofs of kingship to float into the air and revolve around the draconian sage. The entire draconian world shook.

The inhabitants of the draconian world all looked toward the sky, where the draconian sage had finished preparations for the merger. He had explained everything previously, and, having done this in the past, knew what he was doing now.

Dozens of worlds appeared by the horizon, the worlds that the members of Team Zenith and the warlords had taken down during this period of time.

The proof of kingship of the draconian world, a dragon's scale, released a pillar of rainbow light that covered the draconian sage. All the proofs of kingship transformed into orbs of light and rushed into the scale. The draconian sage howled as multicolored scales grew over his body.

The will of the world was starting to merge with the other worlds, devouring their will and their power.

A dragon's howl echoed through the world. As it spread to the neighboring worlds, a huge dragon took to the air. The draconian sage released his aura as his strength climbed furiously.

The dragon swooped down and merged with the draconian sage. The world's energy encapsulated the draconian sage, layer by layer, and formed a gigantic egg, which seemed to be made out of multicolored dragon scales. It gave off a piercing light brighter than even the sun.

The lifeforms of the draconian world looked toward the horizon, where dozens of worlds were starting to link together. Runes danced over their vision as the draconian world transformed. World after world merged into the draconian world, forming a sympathetic link as light strobed in the sky.

The evolution of the world into a superior one would result in immense benefits to all the inhabitants of the world. Their talent and status of life would grow by leaps and bounds.

The aliens were growing stronger at a rate visible to the naked eye.

Those tall and sturdy of stature grew taller and stronger; those wise and intelligent gained more insight. The Yeluo chieftain, who had lots of puzzling ingredients he was trying to figure out what to deal with, suddenly drew connections between them that he had been lacking.

He immediately rushed to his laboratory, where he found to his shock that the herbs within had all been elevated in quality thanks to the evolution.

They were shining with luster, glowing with radiance. Ordinary spiritual herbs grew rare and potent. Some that would have to be cultivated for hundreds of years to reach maturity were maturing right then and there, developing hundreds of years within seconds.

An herbal aroma spread through the air as the Yeluo chieftain cried out in shock, "Are these the benefits of evolution? Is this how strong a superior world is?"

No wonder they were so much stronger than even a peak large world! Just the benefit of evolution had transformed these spiritual herbs beyond what a large world could possess. Such situations were occurring all throughout the draconian world, across the mountains and the wilderness.

The worlds that had merged into the draconian world were subsidiary and had received reduced benefits, but everyone stood to gain from the evolution. The large, medium-sized, and small worlds that had merged into the draconian world would all become part of it, though the draconian world was the heart of the world.

The Yeluo chieftain came to his senses, recalled the potions he wanted to experiment with, and locked himself in his laboratory.

In the disaster-grade farm that had been set up, the genetic lifeforms were howling in excitement as they grew stronger. Regular lifeforms were evolving into mutated-grade, mutated-grade into superior-grade, superior-grade into peak-grade, and some peak-grade lifeforms were even evolving into disaster-grade.

Only a few lifeforms managed the disaster-grade evolution, while others grew beyond peak-grade but without crossing the threshold. It was no problem for a superior world to harbor multiple disaster-grade lifeforms.

The lifeforms who were originally disaster-grade shone with multicolored light, having benefited the most from the evolution, more than any hunter or alien. Some began to molt on the spot, evolving beyond the level of an ordinary disaster-grade lifeform, and one even ascended directly to monarch-grade.

Zhu was shocked to no end by this development, but it wasn't unreasonable. After all, the disaster-grade lifeforms of the farm frequently fought with each other to train and grow, and the evolution of the world had simply allowed them to realize that growth.

Zhu herself benefited. Her body shone radiantly, and her racial talent of being able to manipulate and control other biological lifeforms seemed to have grown to the point where she could control disaster-grade ones.

Despite the massive boon, Zhu sighed. "What a pity—Zhang Lie brought a large number of genetic lifeforms with him out to battle. Otherwise, two or three lifeforms might have evolved directly to monarch-grade!"

#### Chapter 1010: First One, Then Two

The disaster-grade lifeforms that remained in the farm were left behind in case of an emergency; Zhang Lie had taken the majority out to fight. As such, they would be unable to benefit from the boon of evolution.

The black sand desert, which had once been part of the world of black sand, a ruined world drained by the black spirits, had turned glassy after Zhang Lie's disaster-grade evolution there. With the evolution of the draconian world, it became the region of black glass. The black glass absorbed the multicolored energy and underwent a transformation.

The black glass all around the desert was glowing with light, with the luster of gold.

The members of Team Zenith spread their arms out and found themselves brimming with energy. Despite having maxed out their disaster gene fragments, they could feel that their cells were being nourished by some unknown energy, that their own status of life was increasing bit by bit.

Sun Mengmeng murmured to herself, "Is this the benefit of evolution that our captain was talking about?"

The members of Team Zenith raised their heads toward the sky as they watched the glowing dragon egg.

The draconian world was about to evolve into a superior world, and they had to stand guard to prevent any accidents from occurring.

In the scaleman world, the king who was once the ninth prince stood poised on stage. "The time that my master spoke of has come."

A dais had been built on the scaleman world, like the site of a gigantic altar. The kings and leaders of the nearby worlds had gathered around the altar, each bearing their world's proof of kingship.

Within the capital had gathered large numbers of scalemen and aliens from other worlds, all here to witness the evolution of the world.

One of the kings called out, "Your Majesty, it's time to begin."

The king of the scaleman world raised the proof of kingship he held high into the sky. A shining beam of light struck it, enveloping the entire world like the sun. The proof of kingship glowed with rainbow light; the proofs of kingship that the other kings of the realm held floated into the air.

The aliens all looked toward the sky as dozens of worlds appeared by the horizon, linking up with each other.

A pillar of rainbow light descended and covered up the king of the scaleman world. All the proofs of kingship transformed into orbs of light and rushed into the scaleman world's proof of kingship. The king howled as blinding light emanated from his body.

The will of the world was starting to merge with the other worlds, devouring their will and their power.

As more and more proofs of kingship merged, the king's strength grew rapidly.

The world's energy encapsulated the king, layer by layer, forming a gigantic egg. Composed of radiant light, it gave off a piercing light brighter than even the sun.

Runes danced over their vision as the world transformed. World after world merged into the scaleman world, forming a sympathetic link as light strobed in the sky.

The evolution of the world into a superior one would result in immense benefits to all the inhabitants of the world. Their talent and status of life would grow by leaps and bounds.

The aliens were growing stronger at a rate visible to the naked eye.

All manner of life benefited, even plants and herbs.

This was partially why the other worlds had been willing to join in the merger of the worlds. Their worlds had been invaded by the black spirits, and their worlds' vitality had been taken from them. Nothing would grow; there would be nothing for them to eat.

For survival, they had entered into this pact with the scaleman world, willing to give up even their lands. Even so, their worlds' drained vitality meant that they wouldn't be able to receive a significant boon from the evolution; they would be part of a superior world in name, though their environs might not differ much from a peak large world. It was even possible that their worlds didn't possess enough world's energy to allow for the evolution into a superior world.

The inclusion of the world's energy from the scaleman world, however, was enough to push things over the brink.

The aliens within and without the scaleman capital could all feel the burgeoning energy in the air.

The giant egg, composed of radiant light, gave off a piercing light brighter than even the sun.

Runes danced over their vision as the world transformed. World after world merged into the scaleman world, forming a sympathetic link as light strobed in the sky.

The evolution of the world into a superior one would result in immense benefits to all the inhabitants of the world. Their talent and status of life would grow by leaps and bounds.

The aliens were growing stronger at a rate visible to the naked eye.

All manner of life benefited, even plants and herbs. They were shining with luster, glowing with radiance, across the mountains and the wilderness.

Ordinary spiritual herbs grew rare and potent. Some that would have to be cultivated for hundreds of years to reach maturity were maturing right then and there, developing hundreds of years within seconds.

All over the world, genetic lifeforms howled in excitement. Genetic lifeforms had gained the most from the world's evolution.

The hunting grounds that the king of the scaleman world had set up, accelerated in time by the world's energy that had been gathered there, drew in much of the rainbow energy of evolution.

Regular lifeforms were evolving into mutated-grade, mutated-grade into superior-grade, superior-grade into peak-grade, and some peak-grade lifeforms were even evolving into disaster-grade.

Only a few lifeforms managed the disaster-grade evolution, while others grew beyond peak-grade but without crossing the threshold. It was no problem for a superior world to harbor multiple disaster-grade lifeforms.

The kings of the realm who had entered into this pact looked at themselves in shocked surprise as they felt their magnified strength.

Their worlds linked together, forming the last step in the evolution.

He who had once been the crown prince, who now commanded the troops garrisoned in the city, ready to come to the defense of the scaleman king, gazed at the shining egg in the sky with a complicated look: three parts touched, three parts proud, one part resentful, one part envious, and two parts gratified. "Father, are you witnessing what's happening?"

His ninth brother had been recognized by all the nearby worlds and crowned king of them all. He had merged all those worlds and evolved the scaleman world into a superior world...