

## U. Warlord 1011

### Chapter 1011: Shaking the Realm

He who was once the ninth prince, whom no one looked favorably on—he had accomplished an overwhelming feat that none other had done.

With his rule, the scaleman world would only grow stronger.

The crown prince didn't think that he would have been able to do the same. He hadn't been able to defend against the initial tide of black spirits, and he was even certain that his father, the past emperor, would likewise have failed.

However, his ninth brother had done so. The relationship he had formed with Zhang Lie before his ascension to the throne had, in some sense, guaranteed his success now.

After the black spirits, the former crown prince was completely convinced by the new king's ability as a ruler. For the remainder of his life, he had decided to become the garrison commander, to serve and guard the kingdom that his brother had given so much to build.

The members of the three great clans of the scaleman world, looking at their emperor shrouded in light, gazed at him in a complicated fashion.

No one had expected the former ninth prince to accomplish such an incredible deed.

At this point, few even remembered that he had been the weakest among all the princes, the most powerless, the prince that everyone had ignored.

The three great clans all thought that the former ninth prince was the least likely candidate to become king, that he would most likely have perished in the struggle for succession, that he was so useless he wasn't even a pawn to be taken advantage of.

His status was the only valuable thing about him—if he were to live, he would be able to claim a patch of land from the new emperor, where he could happily live out an ordinary, unassuming life.

All those in power in the capital at the time knew that the ninth prince was a piece of trash, an invisible man, whom everyone could bully. To think that he had ended up emperor, venerated by those around him, on the cusp of evolving the scaleman world to a superior one...!

Under his rule, the scaleman world was reaching the apex of the three thousand worlds of the third realm, a vaunted height that would bring the inhabitants of the world unlimited rewards.

The former ninth prince's road to emperor had been an arduous one, almost as though it belonged to a novel. The orphaned youth, now ruler over millions...

Before the former ninth prince's ascent to strength, only one man stood by his side.

This man, whom the kings and leaders of countless world now venerated as their ruler, had once been nothing more than a weakling, who would have fallen to his death with a single wrong step.

He had danced between life and death quite a few times—but as the princes who were strong competitors to the throne fell one by one, the second prince, protected by the Jian clan; the third prince, who killed himself; the fourth prince...

Of the nine princes, the only two remaining were the crown and ninth princes. The ninth prince, who had successfully traversed countless obstacles in his way, finally took the throne.

Many didn't understand why the ninth prince had ascended over the crown prince, but they had all bowed down and acknowledged the former ninth prince's rule upon the coming of the black tide.

The ninth prince, not the crown prince, had been the one to protect the world in its time of need.

Against the onslaught, all other kings and leaders had fallen—all save the former ninth prince. For his success, he was venerated and given fealty by the other kings, bringing the scaleman world to an unprecedented level of success.

At the altar in the center of the capital, the egg enclosed by the rainbow pillar of light began to crack. As the crack propagated, the king of the scaleman world emerged from his shell, his body still bathed in rainbow light.

As natural law danced around him, as the world's energy condensed, a rainbow-colored corona appeared behind the king. He looked down on all who gathered around him, as though he stood at the peak of the world.

The aliens within and without the capital felt a strong pressure on their backs, the likes of which they had never felt before. They knelt and prostrated themselves, and someone called out, "We congratulate the king of the realm on his successful ascent. May his light bless a thousand worlds, may his might last forevermore!"

All others echoed the chant. "We congratulate the king of the realm on his successful ascent. May his light bless a thousand worlds, may his might last forevermore!"

"We congratulate the king of the realm on his successful ascent. May his light bless a thousand worlds, may his might last forevermore!"

"We congratulate the king of the realm on his successful ascent. May his light bless a thousand worlds, may his might last forevermore!"

The waves of sound echoed through the capital, wave after wave, and spread even beyond that.

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The voices of the citizens echoed throughout the world.

Bolstered by the world's energy, the king's strength increased dramatically. He exuded an aura the likes of which couldn't be replicated.

Natural law surrounded him, as blinding as the sun, scorching those who dared to look directly at him.

After the world's evolution, the scaleman king had gained a measure of divinity, one that each superior king possessed, and which couldn't be replicated even by others who were as strong as superior kings.

Those aliens who looked directly at the solar king would find their eyes scorched; those who looked directly at the frost queen would have even their blood and heart freeze; those who looked directly at the king of black fog would themselves be surrounded by fog, and even swallowed up.

Those who looked at the king of evil would melt; those who looked at the decaying king would likewise melt; those who looked at the king of keys would go crazy; those who looked at the king of chaos would become night growlers; those who looked at Li Zongming would feel a stabbing pain in their eyes.

Even the clones of the king of chaos carried traces of that divinity. Those who looked at Nightdemon would feel a sense of fear.

Of course, not everyone would be subject to these consequences. A certain level of strength conferred immunity or drastic weakening of these effects. For instance, someone like Zhang Lie wouldn't be affected.

The ninth prince's voice echoed through the evolved world. "The merger of the worlds is complete. From today onwards, the scaleman world is a superior world!"

Everyone cheered, and their cheers echoed through the air.

Just as the inhabitants of both worlds cheered in joy, the superior worlds were roused to action.

In the world of blazing sun, a humanoid figure leaned against a golden mulberry tree. Beneath its feet was scorching earth and soil, and a hundred suns revolved around the mulberry tree's branches. Ten suns hung in the sky.

"Another superior world—and two of them simultaneously, at that!"

As the solar king felt the disturbance in the world's energy in the third realm, solar flares formed all over his body, and the ten suns behind him glowed with piercing light.

When the solar king sensed the direction from which the two superior worlds came, he gritted his teeth. "Damn it, why are they both within the Zongming world's jurisdiction? Just what's going on over there for superior worlds to be popping up one after the other? The Zongming world's bad enough—but two more, now? Why don't I ever get this lucky?"

Chapter 1012: Besotted

In the white world, covered by frost and ice, shadowed in perennial darkness, over which a raging blizzard howled with no sign of stopping, grew a remarkable race, the frost spirits.

The frost queen, seated within her ornate palace on a throne of frozen jade, likewise sensed the appearance of two new superior worlds. She immediately stood up and frowned. "Two more...?"

Outside the palace, a blizzard continued to rage. She pondered for a moment, then decided, "Now's not the right time. The war against the death spirits is still ongoing. I'll make plans once it's over."

In the world of black fog, wreathed in the eponymous black fog, a humanoid figure could barely be seen in the distance. The fog gradually condensed into a human's face.

"Two more superior worlds... but in the Zongming world's jurisdiction? I'll give up on them for the moment, then."

The face of black fog dissipated.

At the acme of space and time in the third realm, in an environment of pure darkness, floated a massive palace. The palace was removed from the superior worlds, and even from the third realm at large. It existed in an alcove in spacetime, in the liminal space between the third and fourth realms.

In the dim, dark hall that rested within the folds of time, there echoed the low, frenzied beat of a madness-inducing drum, the hollow, monotonous howls of a demonic flute. Countless monsters of myriad forms danced in the hall, nebulous as aether. Women of beauty, sparkling with golden luster, draped in darkness, snake and dragon and man alike...

Despite their differing appearances, they shared one thing in common: to the last, they were each on the level of a superior king.

Countless existences on the level of a superior king danced within a dim, dark hall. On a raised platform at the end of that hall was seated a frightening, awe-inspiring figure, the source of darkness, the origin of a primordial chaos, the end and beginning of all matter. It had no definable boundaries and was difficult to even discern.

The ultimate sin from the deepest chaos, the core and heart of the abyss, the lord of spacetime, who lay beyond human understanding.

Those at the peak of the third realm knew it as the primordial chaos, the king of chaos, the strongest of the known kings.

In truth, it had long since ascended beyond the level of a superior king, and it had given up that position of ruler in the world of primordial chaos. Even so, it still commanded that world, and it wouldn't be difficult for it to take over the third realm at large.

However, it felt that doing so would be meaningless. Only remaining in this palace in the depths of spacetime could still bring it even the slightest enjoyment—and yet this unfathomable existence was smiling now.

"More and more interesting things are happening, aren't they...?"

The evolution of the world succeeded.

A crack appeared on the surface of the giant egg covered by the rainbow pillar of light. As the crack propagated, an illusory dragon soared into the air and revolved around the draconian world. Runes of natural law appeared in the sky where it passed, manifesting for mere moments to the naked eye.

As natural law danced around him, as the world's energy condensed, a rainbow-colored corona appeared behind the draconian sage. He looked down on all who gathered around him, as though he stood at the peak of the world.

He had grown quite a bit younger in the process. The draconians raised their heads, their eyes burning with admiration as they stared at their leader draped in rainbow light.

His rainbow scales were like an ornate robe, and the light that surrounded him and manifested from his every action made him look like a dragon from the heavens. A formless pressure bore down on

them all. The draconian sage, who had just ascended, was yet unused to controlling his new strength. Countless aliens knelt on the ground, and the nearby genetic lifeforms keened and howled.

Bolstered by the world's energy, the draconian sage's strength had increased dramatically. He exuded an unparalleled aura. Natural law surrounded him, as blinding as the sun, and the aliens couldn't help viewing him with fear, awe, and respect.

The members of Team Zenith stood where they were, raising their heads to witness the draconian sage in the sky, their faces calm.

"Rise." The draconian sage wrested his aura back and beckoned with an arm. The kneeling aliens were raised back to their feet by an incredible strength.

Sun Mengmeng strode forward. "It looks as though the merger of the worlds has been a success. Congratulations, draconian sage."

The draconian sage slowly landed by the members of Team Zenith. "It's all thanks to your help. Without you here, without Zhang Lie here, the draconians would have been destroyed by the Mengtai."

To the members of Team Zenith, the draconian sage remained unfailingly polite, without displaying the arrogance of a superior king.

The draconian sage had to treat the human hunters as equals, because behind them stood Zhang Lie. As long as Zhang Lie remained in the third realm, the draconian sage would treat them with his fullest respect.

Without the members of Team Zenith and the warlords of the Milky Way taking down world after world, the draconians wouldn't have had a chance to evolve their world. Without Zhang Lie giving them an opportunity, the draconian world would have been attacked by other worlds during its evolution.

The draconian sage keenly understood that his success today could be attributed in large part to the humans.

He smiled. "All this was thanks to your hard work. I won't forget what the humans did, and I hope you'll help defend the superior draconian world from now on as well."

Yang Ze replied, "Sage, I expect you'll be more than our equal in combat."

Before the ascension, the draconian sage didn't have strength comparable to that of a superior king, and the members of Team Zenith had grown beyond him.

The draconian sage remained smiling. "You jest, Yang Ze. I'm still not familiar and practiced with my strength, and I don't expect I'll be an opponent for you for quite some time."

Sun Xiaowu smiled as well. "Since you've ascended, Sage, shall we have a big celebration?"

The draconian sage continued to smile. "Exactly so. I've already made preparations for a banquet to be held within the draconian capital, but I'm waiting for the human warriors to arrive."

Sun Mengmeng glanced at the sky. "I wonder how Zhang Lie's doing...?"

Sun Xiaowu sighed. "That's the 56th time..."

Yang Ze shook his head. "No, already the 60th."

Fang Yi nodded. "And if we include the two words 'Zhang Lie', it's the 180th time in all."

Sun Mengmeng blinked at them, bewildered. "What are all of you talking about?"

Chapter 1013: What is Love?

Sun Xiaowu sighed. "Worst of all, my sister doesn't realize what she's doing..."

Sun Mengmeng blushed. "What are all of you talking about?"

Yang Ze shrugged. "Sun Mengmeng, ever since our captain headed to the battlefield, you've been repeatedly mumbling his name. 'I wonder how Zhang Lie's doing...?' is a question you've asked over sixty times by now!"

Sun Mengmeng looked offended. "What do you mean, that's what I do all day?"

"Sis, look over there." Sun Xiaowu pointed at Li Feng. Sun Mengmeng looked over to see him glancing toward the sky, his stubble unkempt, mumbling to himself, "What is love? That we be willing to live and die together..."

Sun Mengmeng:...

Li Feng: "Love, like a shooting star—with whom is it shared? A full moon hanging beyond the world— desolate as a snowfield, with no one who understands it..."

Upon witnessing Li Feng's dim, downcast expression, Sun Mengmeng walked over and waved her hand in front of Li Feng's face. She asked in shock, "What happened to him?"

Yang Ze shrugged. "After our captain took to the battlefield, it's like Li Feng was infected with some kind of virus. He says all this nonsense, just like a computer throwing up error messages! I think he's done for. Looks like he needs to be reformatted."

Li Feng: "Red beans grow in the south, and a few branches' worth bloom in spring. Gather what you can, for they convey yearning best."

Sun Mengmeng blinked. "What did you say? After Zhang Lie departed, Li Feng—"

Zhou Ying and Sun Xiaowu kicked Yang Ze aside. "Don't listen to his nonsense! It's all because of the golden mammoth."

Li Feng's eyes suddenly glowed. He turned toward them. "The golden mammoth? What happened to her? You were talking about her, weren't you?"

Sun Xiaowu replied, "We were discussing the war against the death spirits, and when the golden mammoth and the others would be able to return."

Li Feng smiled. "There's no need to worry. The draconian forces have all participated in many wars before, and nothing will happen to them. Furthermore, our captain's out there as well, and he'll guard them for sure. You know he won't just watch as the allied forces get decimated—and there's no need to worry about our captain either. No one can take him down."

Sun Mengmeng felt as though her behavior was somewhat like Li Feng's.

Suddenly, however, Li Feng's eyes lost his sparkle again. He raised his head and looked toward the sky. "Red beans, red pips, pressed into the heart of dice—such is the depth of my heartfelt longing for you... Now that the draconian world has evolved to a superior world, when will you return?"

Sun Xiaowu grumbled, "Ever since the golden mammoth took to the battlefield, he's been overwhelmed by melancholy. All he does now is recite snippets of poetry from time to time."

Yang Ze sighed. "I thought Li Feng was a normal man, but to think he's interested in bestiality..."

Sun Xiaowu replied, "Bestiality? No, no—"

Fang Yi interrupted, "You mean, interspecies love!"

Li Feng: "What is love? That we be willing to live and die together!"

Yang Ze, Fang Yi, and Sun Xiaowu all clutched their heads in unison. Li Feng's behavior seemed like a fool's to them—but considering the three of them were all single, did any of them really have any right to mock him?

Under ordinary circumstances, Li Feng would have attacked them for laughing at him by now, but ever since the golden mammoth left, it was as though he had become removed from the mortal world. He looked up in the sky, in light and in darkness, and spouted words of poetry from time to time.

"This night's stars are not last night's stars. For whom do the wind and dew wait the night?" Li Feng, infected with a virus as he was, would suddenly present them with a pop-up from time to time. They were sorry for him, but his actions only reminded them that they were all still single!

Sun Mengmeng's lips twitched. "It looks like it's a terminal illness."

Sun Xiaowu turned back to his sister. "Sis, you aren't faring much better yourself."

Sun Mengmeng laughed. "You must be joking! Li Feng's pretty much gone crazy, and it wouldn't be absurd to send him to a mental institute. If I'm worse off than he is, then I might as well deserve death!"

All the members of Team Zenith, including the soulless Li Feng, all turned to gaze at Sun Mengmeng with a pitying expression.

Sun Mengmeng's lips twitched. "It can't be..."

Sun Xiaowu shrugged. "That's why I said that the biggest problem is that you don't even realize it."

Fang Yi groused, "Mengmeng, we all know how much you care about the captain. I think you need to make your feelings clear! Chase after him!"

Sun Mengmeng blushed in embarrassment. "I'm afraid that it'll cause unnecessary trouble for Zhang Lie. He said that it isn't time for us to appear on the battlefield just yet."

Zhou Ying advised, "Even if you were to do so, Mengmeng, I'm sure our captain wouldn't blame you."

Sun Mengmeng shook her head. "I don't want to cause unnecessary trouble for him."

The members of Team Zenith all sighed.

Sun Xiaowu replied, "But hasn't this situation happened in the past already? We'll drop Li Feng for the moment. Sis, you've known our captain for so long, and you were separated from him for quite some time between when he ascended to the third realm and when we did. But you never behaved in such a lovesick fashion before!"

After Zhang Lie's ascension to the third realm, Sun Mengmeng had been separated from him for half a year—but here, it hadn't even been half a month yet.

Sun Mengmeng sighed. "Perhaps it's because the enemies he's facing this time are so strong, and he has no companion by his side—or perhaps because I have nothing to do at the moment, so it's easy for my thoughts to wander."

After Zhang Lie ascended to the third realm, Sun Mengmeng had grown more motivated to advance her own strength, but now, Zhang Lie was on a dangerous battlefield all by himself, and there was nothing she could do.

His allies were all unreliable superior worlds, existences from antiquity whose allegiances weren't clear. They could easily be Zhang Lie's worst enemy.

Zhang Hanxiang and Hong Xi weren't strong enough to help Zhang Lie out in times of need, and they hadn't received any news or reports as to how the war was going. Sun Mengmeng couldn't help but worry.

Sun Xiaowu grumbled, "Sis, there's no need to worry. Have you forgotten what sort of person our captain is? He can deal with any enemy on his own!"

I expect they're already trying to divide up the spoils by now—maybe he's the one worrying about how we're doing."

"Let's hope so."

The unclean world was surrounded by green fog. The entire world seemed like an abyssal trench, with the characteristic gray fluid of the king of evil filling the bottom of that trench.

More and more mutated growths and abominations were visible within that fluid, squelching as they tried to climb out of the abyss, only to be pulled back and devoured.

Upon learning of the evolution of two superior worlds, the gray fluid bubbled and quivered in excitement, and the malformed heads embedded in the fluid screeched in excitement.

The king of keys smiled. "To evolve at such a critical period... I wonder what the Zongming king will do? In the end, though, they're destined to die."

#### Chapter 1014: Victory, For Now

Within the Zongming world, Li Zongming could sense the energy released upon the two superior worlds' evolution. Despite the fact that he had only just become a superior king, this energy was something that all superior kings could innately sense.

"Are these the worlds that Zhang Lie mentioned would evolve before he set off?" Li Zongming focused his attention on the ripples of energy. "If I'm not mistaken, one of them is the draconian world to which Zhang Lie belongs. As expected, the worlds he frequent must be exceptional in their own right..."

Li Zongming continued to review a scroll on his throne, not intending to take action against either world.

Zhang Lie had informed him of the evolution beforehand; he would discuss how to handle the ramifications with Zhang Lie when he returned.

"I suppose the other superior worlds will make a move..."

Back in the shattered world of black rain, Zhang Lie declared, "I'm heading back now."

Nightdemon smirked. "So urgently? Do these worlds have anything to do with you?"

Zhang Lie rolled his eyes. "After two such worlds appeared within the Zongming world's jurisdiction, I have to make a move before the other superior worlds can."

Nightdemon replied, "There's no need to worry. Before the other superior worlds know that the death spirits have been dealt with, they won't do anything."

The Zongming world is safe for the moment. We'll see how the situation unfolds afterwards."

Zhang Lie replied, "Regardless, this is urgent business, and I had better rush back immediately. I'll leave the other superior worlds to you."

Given that his clone was here, the king of chaos surely knew of the news. The ice queen would be informed by the frost spirit commander, and the king of keys by his son.

Nightdemon replied, "It remains to contact the king of evil, the king of black fog, and the solar king. I'll deal with that."

Zhang Lie waved at him in acknowledgement, then headed toward the allied forces. Among the survivors, the Zongming forces were an absolute majority—Zhang Lie had kept his promise to guard the forces of the Zongming, draconian, and scaleman worlds.

Hong Xi and the others were working on administrative affairs when Zhang Lie found them. He asked, "How are the losses?"

Zhang Hanxiang replied, "With everyone's cooperation, we haven't lost too many troops."

Zhang Lie nodded. "Good. The war's over, so we can all go home now."

Upon hearing the words 'go home', everyone smiled—and quite a few aliens shed tears.

They could finally return home, after having survived quite a few life-and-death encounters on a battlefield that seemed to be galaxies away.

Zhang Lie sighed. "None of you will gain any rewards from participating in this battle, and I can't even ensure that all of you will return safe and sound."

These were all warriors who had protected the third realm from certain doom with their lives, but Zhang Lie wasn't even able to give them a reward or guarantee them safe travels.

Zhang Hanxiang replied, "Don't say that, Brother. Everyone came here in order to protect the third realm from the death spirits' encroachment."

Before the situation could grow tense, Nightdemon slowly landed by Zhang Lie's side. "I can handle transporting all your troops back to their homeworlds."

Zhang Lie turned to him. "Can you?"

Nightdemon shrugged. "I'm a superior king, after all, even if this is only one of my clones. Of course I can establish a temporary wormhole."

The ink-black man also appeared by his side. "As for rewards, you can bring it up during the post-war meeting. I don't know what the outcome will be, though."

The warriors smiled in excitement. Compared to whatever measly reward they might obtain, they were happier about the recognition they would receive.

"I'll try my best." Zhang Lie knew very well what the superior kings were like, and how they viewed the aliens of lesser worlds as nothing more than ants. It would be difficult to convince them to give the aliens a fair share of rewards.

Nightdemon invoked the authority of a superior king. His shadow lengthened; his aura grew tremendously strong. The shadow seemed like the source of darkness, the origin of a primordial chaos, the end and beginning of all matter.

As his eyes flashed, three wormholes appeared. "To the Zongming world, the white world, and the king of keys respectively."

Zhang Lie nodded. "Thank you."

Before the frost spirit commander left, he extended a hand toward Zhang Lie. "I don't think I'll ever forget this war. I hope the next time we meet won't be on the battlefield."

Zhang Lie shook the frost spirit commander's ethereal hand. "Likewise."

Wilbow also offered Zhang Lie a handshake. "Thanks to you, we were easily able to end this war. I hope we won't meet again."

Zhang Lie couldn't help but laugh. "Shouldn't you hope to meet me again?"

Wilbow rolled his eyes. "You're a warrior of the Zongming world, and nothing good can come out of meeting you in the future. Either we're battling against each other, or we're both on the battlefield against a common enemy."

Zhang Lie inclined his head with a wry smile. "In that case, I hope I won't see you again, either."

Wilbow waved as he headed toward his wormhole. The ten million troops he had brought had dwindled to no more than ten thousand.

Such was the cost of war. The survival of so many of the Zongming world's forces could only be attributed to luck and Zhang Hanxiang and Hong Xi's hard work.

Nightdemon floated over. "You truly are an interesting fellow. I won't bid you farewell—I know we'll see each other again soon enough."

"Do you mean in the subsequent meeting, Nightdemon?"

Nightdemon grinned. His white coat, stained by blood, turned a dark-red color. "Who knows?"

The red of Nightdemon's coat deepened and darkened until it was almost black. Then, it flashed and opened wide, transforming into a pair of bat's wings. The black wings wrapped around Nightdemon as he took to the sky. When they unfurled again, he had morphed into a gigantic bat with a brilliant white smile the shape of a crescent moon, as though he were mocking the entire world. "Until our next meeting, hahahaha!"

Nightdemon vanished into the void, leaving nothing but an echo of his laughter behind. The ink-black man likewise bowed and disappeared into the darkness.

Zhang Lie waved a hand. "Let's set off too, then."

Following Zhang Lie's lead, the forces of the Zongming world marched into the wormhole.

Zhang Lie turned to his sister. "Are you satisfied now, Hanxiang? You've participated in a mythical battle of the third realm, just as you wanted to—and this battle will surely be recorded in the annals of the realm."

#### Chapter 1015: Returning to the Zongming World

Zhang Hanxiang's expression was serious. She didn't reply to Zhang Lie, who pretended not to see how upset she was and continued, "When we return to the draconian world, I expect it'll have evolved to a superior world.

Once the hunters return to the Milky Way and spread the news of what we've done, the entire galaxy will be in an uproar. Your name will be written in the history books! Aren't you happy?"

Zhang Hanxiang shook her head.

"What did you learn during this war, then?"

Zhang Hanxiang sighed. "That I'm not strong enough to protect anyone. If only I were stronger, I'd be able to accomplish more on the battlefield—and I wouldn't have to watch as my allies and companions perished!"

In this war, she and countless others felt their mediocrity, their insignificance. She wasn't even able to withstand the aftermath of her brother's clash against an enemy, let alone help him. Like a leaf, she was forced to flutter in the wind.

"What you've learned from this experience makes it more than worth it. You and Hong Xi did very well, and Hong Xi in particular did far better than I had expected. I would have been happy enough to see you both survive such a mythical battle, but Hong Xi even managed to anticipate enemy attacks and make wise decisions multiple times on the battlefield, keeping our losses to the minimum."

Hong Xi scratched her head. "Master, you're praising me too much! Didn't you make me the battlefield commander for this reason?"

"I did, because I noted your talent and genius in this area, but you're far more amazing than I had expected. Even if I were you, given your current level of strength, I wouldn't have been able to replicate your feats—no, I'm sure no one else on the battlefield would have!"

Upon hearing Zhang Lie's words, those fighters standing around them all nodded.

Hong Xi had played an instrumental role in the survival of the forces.

Initially, many had failed to understand why Zhang Lie had chosen Hong Xi as the battlefield commander. They were largely unfamiliar with her, despite the fact that she was Zhang Lie's disciple, and were skeptical of her abilities as a result.

They felt as though there had to be a better choice for the position, but no one dared to disagree with Zhang Lie's decision. After the war against the death spirits finished, however, the fighters all uniformly praised Zhang Lie for his choice.

After the war ended, everyone felt that Hong Xi was the best choice, the only choice, who had been able to do what no other could accomplish.

No one had predicted the blood lord's betrayal, not even Hong Xi, but she had immediately given the most appropriate commands in light of that information. Her actions in the following battle were even more impressive.

The fighters who had survived the war were very relieved that they had chosen to believe in and carry out Hong Xi's commands—because those who had distrusted or disobeyed her had all perished.

By word and deed, Hong Xi had earned the respect and admiration of all the fighters on the battlefield.

"I only did what I should have. You assigned me such an important role, Master, and I had to carry it out to the best of my ability to avoid besmirching your name," Hong Xi replied seriously.

"Be proud of yourself. Every life here is one you saved. Regardless of what rewards are distributed to you as spoils of war, I'll have something for the two of you once we return to the superior draconian world."

"What reward?" Zhang Hanxiang asked curiously.

Hong Xi frowned. "The superior draconian world?"

Zhang Lie clarified, "Not long ago, the draconian world merged with its neighbors and evolved into a superior world. This was something I arranged with the draconian sage before we set off to war."

Zhang Hanxiang replied, "That's amazing! It must have grown much stronger."

Zhang Hanxiang and Hong Xi had only a vague understanding of superior worlds; all they knew was that they were extremely strong.

"We can't be sure of that just yet."

Hong Xi narrowed her eyes. "Is something going to happen?"

"We can talk about that later when there's a chance. We're here."

The fighters walked out of the other end of the wormhole to find themselves back in the Zongming world. "We're back!"

Li Zongming teleported in front of them, a gentle smile on his face. "Welcome back."

Zhang Lie grinned. "As promised, no death spirits will ever trouble us again."

Li Zongming nodded. "Thank you, and thank you for protecting the warriors of the Zongming world."

Zhang Lie joked, "Aren't we going to get a welcoming ceremony?"

Li Zongming scratched his head. "You all returned too quickly for me to prepare anything, so no, there's no ceremony, but you can have my warm and passionate hug instead."

Li Zongming spread his arms and reached for Zhang Lie, who hurriedly stepped back. "No, no thanks! I'll accept your intentions, but I'd rather get a hug from your daughter."

Li Zongming smiled. "Go find her, then—though I imagine she'll find you herself when she learns that you've returned. Look, isn't she coming?"

Li Zongming pointed toward the sky, where Li Qianlin was rushing out of her quarters.

Zhang Lie subconsciously smiled. Turning to Hong Xi, he said, "Hong Xi, I'll leave the rest for you."

Before Hong Xi could react, Zhang Lie had already flown off.

Li Zongming turned to the fighters who had been standing behind Zhang Lie. "Thank you for your hard work, everyone. I've provided lodgings for all of you. Please follow me."

Hong Xi and the warlords followed Li Zongming, whereas the other alien fighters had no intention of staying. They pleaded, "We wouldn't want to inconvenience you, your majesty. We'd like to bring news of our victory to our kin—will you allow us to leave?"

"Yes, we'd like to see our loved ones as quickly as we can!"

Li Zongming dipped his head. "Naturally."

The alien fighters bade farewell to Hong Xi and the warlords as they marched toward the wormholes leading to their homeworlds.

The aliens of the draconian world were very envious. They too wanted to return to their families, but Zhang Lie, their de facto leader, was in the middle of a romantic tryst with the Zongming princess. Not wanting to leave without their leader's command, they could only head to the lodgings that had been prepared for them, and the banquet that would follow...

#### Chapter 1016: Core of Black Rain

Zhang Lie and Li Qianlin hugged each other in mid-air. The moment Li Qianlin had learned of the news of Zhang Lie's return, she had flown into the air immediately—but she didn't know what to say now that they were right in front of each other.

She had prepared lots of complaints for Zhang Lie, but she didn't know how to start addressing them. In the end, it was Zhang Lie who first smiled and said, "I'm back."

Li Qianlin smiled as well. "Welcome back."

The two of them paused for a moment before Li Qianlin continued, "Are you hurt anywhere?"

Zhang Lie shook his head.

He asked, "Did you miss me?"

Li Qianlin folded her arms. "As if! Who would miss a fellow like you?"

"My dear daughter spent all day looking at the skies, awaiting your return—but now that you're standing right in front of her, she doesn't want to admit it."

Li Zongming had, at some point, appeared behind her.

Li Qianlin blushed. "Father!"

Li Zongming smiled. "Embarrassed, aren't you? Sorry to be a bother—I can leave now if you'd like to spend some more time together."

Zhang Lie laughed. "You must have something urgent to tell us if you're here now, your majesty."

"No, no, none of that. Call me Father, or Father-in-Law."

Zhang Lie dipped his head. "Very well, Father-in-Law."

Li Qianlin's face blushed as red as an apple.

Li Zongming smiled, pleased. "I don't want to disturb the two of you lovebirds—it's been quite some time since you last saw each other, after all. However, I'd very much like to learn about what happened during the war against the death spirits, and there's important business that I need to discuss with you. I also have to speak with you before the meeting of the superior worlds, so if you're both fine with it..."

As they walked to Li Zongming's chambers, Li Zongming inquired about the details of the war, which Zhang Lie quickly recounted.

Li Zongming gasped. "Blood Heaven, destroyed by the traitorous blood lord? He even laid an ambush for you after betraying the blood king... It must have been difficult for you and the others to survive."

Zhang Lie shrugged. "I alone likely wouldn't have been able to protect the Zongming forces. It's thanks to the king of chaos' clone that I was able to focus fully on the fighting. Without Nightdemon, I would only have been able to protect a fraction of the fighters, and the allied forces would have suffered greatly."

Li Zongming sighed. "For a new death spirit king to have appeared on the battlefield after the old one was slain, and then a sneak attack by the decaying king... A lot of things have happened."

The enemies' strength hadn't been the biggest factor—it was his purported allies' actions that had caused several emergencies.

Zhang Lie sighed. "That said, in the end, it was our victory."

Li Zongming lowered his head. "I'm truly thankful for your help."

Zhang Lie waved his hands. "No, there's no need for that! I volunteered to participate."

Li Zongming replied seriously, "Regardless, I have to thank you for bringing so many fighters back, safe and sound."

"I also received two spoils of war from killing the death spirit king and the decaying king," Zhang Lie told Li Zongming.

He first handed over the crystal that he had obtained from killing the death spirit king. The moment the rainbow-colored crystal was exposed to the air, the entire Zongming world trembled. The will of the Zongming world made clear its desire for that crystal.

Li Zongming sucked in a deep breath. "This is astounding. If the Zongming world were able to absorb the world's energy in this crystal, it would surely be elevated significantly."

Zhang Lie rolled his eyes. "This is the biggest reward from the war. It'll have to be brought to the superior worlds' meeting, then split up accordingly."

Li Zongming blinked. "Is there such an agreement?"

"Did no one tell you?"

"Who would tell me?" Li Zongming was the king of a newly evolved superior world, and the other superior kings didn't think much of him. They would be happier to witness his downfall than not—why would they inform him of any such obligations?

Zhang Lie replied, "The king of chaos' clone told me about it, so I'm confident of its veracity."

After seeing Zhang Lie present the first spoils of war, Li Zongming was very curious about the second.

"And the second?" he asked.

Zhang Lie replied, "The second is ours. It doesn't have to be shared with the other superior kings."

Li Zongming grew even more eager to see exactly what it was.

Zhang Lie retrieved the beating golden heart that he had obtained from the world of black rain. Upon witnessing the multicolored shine over its surface, Li Zongming felt a sense of budding familiarity with it. He recognized it instantly.

"Isn't this a proof of kingship?"

Zhang Lie nodded. "Exactly so. It's a proof of kingship of a superior world."

Li Zongming recalled what Zhang Lie had told him about the decaying king's sneak attack, and how Zhang Lie had killed him in retaliation.

"This is the proof of kingship of the world of black rain?"

"Indeed." Zhang Lie proffered the beating golden heart to Li Zongming, who swallowed a gulp of saliva. "You want to merge the Zongming world with the world of black rain?"

Zhang Lie countered, "You don't want to?"

"I couldn't possibly..." Even so, Li Zongming didn't refuse the offer. He accepted it immediately. Zhang Lie wouldn't be able to do anything with it, but he would gain an immense benefit.

Li Zongming asked, "When do you think would be the best time to do so?"

"After the superior worlds' meeting. If you want to merge the world of black rain with the draconian world, you'll have to summon it over, and that will take some time."

The two worlds would have to be connected to be merged.

There was quite a bit of distance between the Zongming world and the world of black rain, a distance of hundreds of worlds. It would take significant effort to move and then subsequently combine them.

This was why the superior worlds of antiquity chose to extract the world's energy from newly evolved superior worlds, rather than to combine with them—doing so was a significantly more complex endeavor.

#### Chapter 1017: Informing the Worlds

Li Zongming suggested, "Perhaps we can simply extract the world's energy from the world of black rain."

Zhang Lie shrugged. "I wouldn't recommend it myself—there isn't much left."

"Indeed."

After the death spirit king suppressed the decaying king, he sucked up the world's energy that it possessed, attempting to drain it of all its resources.

To the other superior worlds, the current state of the world of black rain made it rather unpalatable. Much of the world's energy had already been drained from it, and the world itself was half-dead. There wasn't much to be gained from absorbing it—but the situation was different for the Zongming world, which had only recently evolved into a superior world. As a result, its reserves couldn't be compared to those worlds that had existed since antiquity.

Much of the world's energy from the world of black rain had been sucked away by the death spirit king; there was little remaining—at least, relative to what the other superior worlds possessed. For the newly evolved Zongming world, it would provide no small benefit.

None of the other superior worlds would care about the ruined world of black rain, but the newly evolved Zongming world was different. The Zongming world would be able to gain a tremendous boon by merging the worlds together.

Li Zongming couldn't wait. "If it's going to take some time to do so, why don't we try to summon the world of black rain immediately?"

Zhang Lie nodded. "That's not a problem."

Li Zongming immediately infused his energy into the proof of kingship, causing it to beat at a rapid pace.

At that very moment, the frost spirit commander returned with his scant few troops to the white world, where he was met directly by the ice queen. The frost spirit commander knelt in trepidation.

The ice queen waved a hand. "Enough with the formalities. Tell me what happened during the war."

The frost spirit commander recounted the affairs he had witnessed.

The ice queen breathed a sigh of relief. "To think that this would be such an arduous battle—the blood lord actually betrayed the blood king? In the end, however, the death spirit king has been killed, and the three thousand worlds of this realm can gain a measure of peace—but if all that are left of the original troops are these scant few fighters, it must truly have been a devastating battle."

The frost spirit commander was very glad that he hadn't mentioned how 80% of the Zongming world's troops had survived.

The frost spirit commander sighed. "Yes, your majesty. It truly was an overwhelming battle. The death spirit king had managed to develop weapons of war on the level of superior kings, and many of our fighters died as a result.

All the members of the solar corps perished, even their captain."

"Indeed? Excellent!" the ice queen cried out in excitement.

She loved to hear news of the solar king's losses. Most importantly, the captain of his solar corps had died on the battlefield, while her commander was still alive.

The frost spirit commander knew of her distaste for the solar king, and had smartly decided to present her with this information first.

"The forces of the unclean world were entirely wiped out, as was the clone of the king of black fog. The forces of chaos were wiped out, and only a few fighters from the king of keys survived. Even the decaying king itself perished."

The ice queen sighed. "I must thank you for your hard work in helping to kill such an ambitious, frightening existence as the death spirit king, then. It's all thanks to the troops' sacrifice that the three thousand worlds of the realm are safe once more. You all deserve credit."

The frost spirit commander bowed. "Serving the white world is my honor, but I do pity those fallen troops. The king of chaos suggested rewarding the fighters and warriors who have survived the war.

The ice queen nodded. "We'll discuss this during the meeting to be convened. You've also done very well—await my reward. Go and rest, now. There might still be wars up ahead, and I'll need you to take to the battlefield again."

The frost spirit commander was rather shocked. "Another war?"

"It's only a possibility for the moment. We'll see what happens after the meeting—now, go rest!"

A frost spirit attendant entered the chamber just then. "Your majesty, a clone of the king of chaos is here."

Wilbow informed the king of keys of what had happened on the battlefield, who reacted mildly.

The king of keys commented, "I hadn't expected you would be able to take down the death spirit king in one fell swoop. What did you think of the Zongming world's fighters?"

Wilbow replied, "Their commander is excellent, and Zhang Lie's very strong. He's likely beyond the level of an ordinary superior king in strength. He and Nightdemon killed the death spirit king together.

The king of keys replied, "If that's the case, then the upcoming meeting should be very interesting. Wouldn't you agree, king of chaos?"

Black thunder and flames suddenly crossed in mid-air as a double-headed bat appeared before the king of keys.

Its mouth was filled with fangs, and countless star-shaped eyes flashed and moved about its two heads. As its wings flapped, more strange black thunder and flames flashed around it.

"The superior kings' meeting will occur three days later. All kings are expected to show up."

The double-headed bat flapped its wings, then vanished back into the void.

Wilbow asked, "What was that? Why haven't I heard of such an existence—on the level of a superior king, no less—before?"

The king of keys' tone seemed mirthful, but not his voice. "There are plenty of clones of the king of chaos you're not acquainted with."

Wilbow's eyes widened. "Father, you mean to say that that double-headed bat was a clone of the king of chaos?"

"If I'm not mistaken, its name is L'rogg. But is it really a surprise that you haven't heard of it before? There are countless people among the three thousand worlds, and no one knows how many clones the king of chaos possesses. I wouldn't be surprised to hear that the king of chaos's clones could form a battalion, each member with the strength of a superior king."

In a world over which a hundred suns hung in the air, a pitch-black, shadowy warrior emerged, a tyrant of the dark. It stood in front of the solar king, golden flames burning all over his body, golden light radiating from his eyes, an expression of intense anger distorting his face...

#### Chapter 1018: A Change in Circumstances

Of course, the solar king wasn't angry because of the black suit of armor that had appeared in front of him; he didn't dare to be angry at the armor.

The black armor was another clone of the king of chaos; if he were to destroy that clone, the king of chaos would likely destroy him. He was incensed because of another matter entirely. "A bunch of useless trash! No wonder they were all annihilated!"

The king of chaos's clone had already explained what had happened during the fight to the solar king.

The solar king's anger was directed at the captain of the solar corps, who had lost him his entire set of forces.

Under ordinary circumstances, the solar king wouldn't have been so upset—rather, it was because the ice queen's forces had fared much better in comparison. The frost spirit commander and a fraction of the troops he commanded had survived, whereas his had been destroyed in its entirety. He just knew that the ice queen would taunt and mock him during the superior kings' meeting.

"I've conveyed the message. Please remember that the meeting will be in three days' time. All kings are expected to be present at the meeting."

The black armor vanished into the shadows and disappeared from sight.

At the same time, just outside the world of black fog, another clone of the king of chaos appeared—a huge gelatinous mass, from which golden tentacles emerged. The black fog condensed into the form of a face.

"Is something the matter, king of chaos?"

As Nightdemon had promised, the king of chaos would be responsible for transmitting information about the upcoming meeting to the various kings, including the unclean world and the world of black fog. He shared the news that the superior worlds had won against the death spirits, and informed them as to the time of the meeting.

Far on the other side of the realm, the world of black rain began to move. It trembled and shook, then slowly began to float in the direction of the Zongming world.

Li Zongming told Zhang Lie, "The draconian world and the scaleman world, like you told me, have evolved into superior worlds. I haven't done anything to impede their growth. What are your plans now?"

Zhang Lie replied, "Ignore them for the moment. Dispatch an envoy to each world to broker an alliance—and we can talk about the rest after the meeting."

The Zongming world would be able to gain immense benefits from absorbing the two new superior worlds, but Li Zongming didn't want to become Zhang Lie's enemy. He would respect Zhang Lie's decision, considering both worlds had his acquaintances.

Li Zongming shrugged. "I don't mind, but I suspect the other superior worlds will."

"In that case, I hope you'll take a stance against the other kings, your majesty."

Li Zongming inclined his head. "Very well. Since you're familiar with people on both worlds, I'll consider it as repaying you a favor."

Li Zongming was very happy to be able to repay Zhang Lie a favor. He owed Zhang Lie far too many, after all, and wouldn't be able to repay them all even if he were to sell his daughter.

For one, if Zhang Lie hadn't slaughtered his way into the xuluo world, the Zongming world would have become nothing more than rubble by now—let alone what he had accomplished during this war against the death spirits. Zhang Lie had helped the Zongming world far too much.

Li Zongming waved a hand. "You're my son-in-law, after all. This bit of trouble is nothing."

Zhang Lie smiled.

Li Zongming asked, "What are your thoughts on the upcoming meeting?"

Zhang Lie replied, "The meeting will be convened once the other superior worlds find out that we've taken down the death spirits."

Just as the two of them were about to discuss the meeting, Li Zongming suddenly perked up and looked outside. "A strong existence has emerged by the border of the Zongming world."

"How strong?" Zhang Lie asked.

"He's on the level of a superior king."

"Let's go have a look, then."

Li Zongming teleported both of them right outside the border of his world,

where they found a beautiful woman with a long, black dress, a red sash, golden hair, and blood-red eyes. She covered her face coquettishly with a fan.

The woman bowed. "The esteemed Zongming king, and Mr. Zhang Lie."

Zhang Lie frowned. The woman in front of him felt very strange, as though he were facing another copy of Nightdemon.

Zhang Lie activated his dragon's eye soulshard to inspect her soul—the source of darkness, the essence of primordial chaos, the end and beginning of all matter. It had no definable boundaries and was difficult to even discern. The ultimate sin from the deepest chaos, the core and heart of the abyss—

Zhang Lie began to sweat. His one glance at the woman's soul shook him. Even now, as he recalled what he had witnessed, he began to tremble. The woman's soul seemed like part of a larger whole, and it was somehow familiar. He had witnessed its like before in Nightdemon.

This was undoubtedly another clone of the king of chaos.

Zhang Lie deactivated his dragon's eye soulshard, only to find that the woman in front of him had become a massive, bloated body with tentacles, a frightening arthropodal mouthpart with grotesque teeth, and a sickle in its hands.

Li Zongming frowned and asked, "May I ask what you're doing here, miss?"

Zhang Lie's expression grew stiff. "Your majesty, this is no woman, but rather a clone of the king of chaos."

In Li Zongming's eyes, the ravishing woman smiled lightly, still covering her face with a fan; in Zhang Lie's eyes, the monster waved its sickle and held it threateningly in front of him.

A tongue extended out of the mouthpart and licked the sickle's blade. The tentacles danced. "It looks like you've seen through my illusion, Mr. Zhang Lie."

Li Zongming cocked his head at Zhang Lie. "What's the matter?"

How could this woman be a clone of the king of chaos?

Zhang Lie explained, "The king of chaos has many clones, and she's simply one of them."

The monster replied, "Since you're here, Mr. Zhang Lie, I imagine the Zongming king has been informed of our victory against the death spirit king."

Li Zongming nodded.

"In that case, I won't have to explain much. The superior kings' meeting will occur in three days' time. All kings are expected to show up." The monster left immediately after conveying this message.

Zhang Lie replied, "This early? Your majesty, if there's nothing else, I'll be bringing the draconian troops back to their world."

Li Zongming nodded. "Why don't you accompany me to this meeting as well?"

"Of course."

Zhang Lie nodded, then returned to the Zongming world to bid farewell to Li Qianlin.

Li Qianlin stood up. "Let me accompany you there!"

Suddenly, realizing the impropriety of her actions, she blushed and explained, "There's nothing major that I have to do here in the palace, and I hate being supervised and guarded at all times. I feel much freer in the draconian world, and I believe Father will allow me to accompany you."

"I won't." Li Zongming suddenly appeared outside the door.

Li Qianlin was startled. "Father, you're here?"

Li Zongming smiled. "This is my palace. Why wouldn't I be here?"

"You heard me, then, Father?" Li Qianlin's blush deepened.

Chapter 1019: The Exceptional Golden Mammoth

Li Zongming shrugged. "After all, I'm still a superior king. I might not be stronger than your husband, but I still have authority over the Zongming world. As long as he doesn't specially shield himself, there's nothing in the palace that can hide from my senses."

Li Qianlin asked, "Why can't I accompany Zhang Lie back? Weren't you in favor of it beforehand?"

Li Zongming shook his head. "Daughter, the circumstances have changed."

Zhang Lie remained silent, causing Li Qianlin to understand that there was something unusual happening.

"Did something happen?"

Li Zongming took two steps forward and rubbed Li Qianlin's head. "Yes, but it's nothing major. Zhang Lie and I will take care of it, so you don't have to worry."

Li Qianlin tossed Li Zongming's hand aside with displeasure. "Don't treat me like a kid, Father!" Li Qianlin wasn't upset that Li Zongming was caressing her head, but rather that he still refused to inform her about what was happening.

Li Zongming sighed in regret. "It's true—you're not a little kid anymore, and you'd be able to take care of yourself even if we weren't here..."

Li Qianlin pressed, "Did something happen in the draconian world, or in ours?"

Zhang Lie thought for a moment. "It's a bit of both, but mainly a problem with the draconian world."

Li Zongming shrugged. "There's nothing much to say. The situation has simply changed."

Zhang Lie replied, "Now that the draconian world has evolved into a superior world, it's not very safe."

Not very safe? Weren't worlds supposed to increase in strength upon evolution? How could it have grown less safe? Li Qianlin didn't ask this question out loud. She thought back to what had happened when the worlds of east and west merged into what was now the Zongming world. If not for Zhang Lie's presence then, the Zongming world would have been destroyed.

Li Qianlin wasn't a naive and innocent princess who remained cooped up in a palace. She quickly understood the cause of the trouble and asked, "Those vile superior worlds! Are they going to try for the draconian world next?"

Li Zongming stroked his daughter's head. "Don't worry about it. Zhang Lie and I will take care of it all—but please, stay inside for the time being. It's not safe out there.

The draconian world might become the next battlefield, and the Zongming world might also be implicated. I would strongly prefer if you were to remain with me for now."

Li Qianlin frowned. "So they will come, then."

Li Zongming replied, "In two days' time, Zhang Lie and I will be participating in a meeting among the superior worlds. There has to be someone left in charge in the Zongming world. As my daughter, you're the best temporary substitute for me, in identity and reputation."

Zhang Lie added, "I'll leave Gold Comet behind. It's strong enough to take on fighters on the level of superior kings."

Even if it wouldn't be able to protect the Zongming world on its own, it would be able to flee with Li Qianlin even if she were simultaneously attacked by a few such fighters.

Li Qianlin nodded. "Very well. Leave the Zongming world to me for the time being!"

After bidding farewell to Li Qianlin, Zhang Lie met up with the draconian world's forces. Li Zongming had treated them very well, and they were given the best food and the best lodgings.

Upon seeing Zhang Lie, Zhang Hanxiang hurried up to him and asked, "Brother, are you finished with your tryst with Li Qianlin?"

Zhang Lie caressed her head. "What're you talking about? I was discussing business with the Zongming king."

Zhang Hanxiang nodded sagely. "I understand. Marriage is important business, after all. It's good that you and Li Qianlin are getting along, but please don't neglect me and Sun Mengmeng!"

"You're my sister and my only family. Why would I neglect you because of Qianlin? But I don't see what this has to do with Sun Mengmeng."

Zhang Hanxiang sighed. "Poor Sun Mengmeng..."

Xing Ying strode forward. "Zhang Lie, will you join our feast? The Zongming king had it prepared for us."

Zhang Lie shook his head. "Are you all ready to set off?"

Hong Xi asked, "Master, are we leaving?"

Zhang Lie explained, "In three days' time, I'll be participating in a meeting among the superior kings. There isn't much time. Before I leave, I want to send you all back to the draconian world."

Hong Xi put down her chopsticks. "Let's go, then."

Although the fighters were only halfway done with their feast, no one begrudged Zhang Lie's words. They immediately packed up and prepared to leave.

After two days, the draconian troops finally returned to the draconian world.

Upon witnessing the dramatic changes that had happened there, everyone was shocked—even Hong Xi and Zhang Hanxiang, who had known about the evolution of the world beforehand.

The world had grown considerably more massive and wide in extent.

A draconian fighter couldn't help but ask, "Is this really our homeworld?"

Zhang Lie nodded. "While we were gone, the draconian world merged with its neighbors into a superior draconian world."

The aliens couldn't wait to see what had happened to their worlds.

With a spatial distortion, the draconian sage appeared in front of them all. He announced, "Welcome back, brave warriors!"

The draconian sage had grown considerably stronger. His old, aged form had seemingly reverted in time, and he was once again in the prime of his youth. There was a divine halo behind him.

Zhang Hanxiang didn't immediately recognize him. "Who are you?"

The draconian sage smiled. "Don't you recognize me, Hanxiang? It's only been a few days..."

Zhang Lie introduced, "This is the draconian sage."

Zhang Hanxiang couldn't help but ask, "Sage, why did you install a lightbulb behind your back to show off?"

The draconian sage began to cough violently, dismissing the halo of light as Zhang Lie chuckled to himself by the side.

The draconian sage turned serious again and addressed the fighters. "I thank you all for your hard work. With your sweat and blood, you protected and upheld the integrity of the three thousand worlds, defeating the death spirit king and his ambitions. Zhang Lie, Zhang Hanxiang, and Hong Xi—thank you in particular for bringing the troops back safe and sound."

Zhang Lie waved a hand. "Thank you. If you don't mind, can we cut this short? Everyone's tired from their travels, and I'm sure they'll be happy to see their families again."

The draconian sage nodded with a smile. "Of course. Stand with the rest of your species, if you please. I'll transport you to your respective regions with my authority."

The troops began to spread out orderly. Only when they had segregated did the draconian sage realize just how many different species were represented among the troops.

Zhang Lie, Zhang Hanxiang, and Hong Xi had really worked hard to make sure that these different species were able to cooperate with each other.

The draconian sage specified, "The herdleader of the mammoths, please step forward."

The golden mammoth pointed at herself uncertainly.

The draconian sage continued, "If you don't mind, I'd like you to return to the draconian capital with Zhang Lie and the others. Li Feng has been waiting for you, and he's almost gone mad with anticipation."

The golden mammoth cried out, "Li Feng was waiting for me?"

The draconian sage sighed. "More than that—he spends all day reciting poetry sleeplessly. If not for his astounding strength, he'd long since have collapsed!"

Chapter 1020: Sun Mengmeng, the Broken Record

The golden mammoth harrumphed. "Don't joke with me, please, Sage! You must be over-exaggerating. Li Feng told me that it would be a difficult task for humans and aliens to be together. Humans are going to move on from this realm, and it'll be difficult for them to be with us, who are closer to beasts. Li Feng told me that it would be impossible for the two of us..."

Zhang Hanxiang replied, "Logically, perhaps, but love doesn't follow the rules of logic. I can't explain it to you myself—but when you see what Li Feng's like, I think you'll understand."

The draconian sage nodded. "Indeed. If you want to verify that I'm telling the truth, simply go have a look at Li Feng."

The golden mammoth, filled with equal parts anticipation and worry that the draconian sage was lying to her, eventually made up her mind. "Very well. I'll take a look at Li Feng."

With a wave of his hand, the draconian sage sent the aliens back to their homeworlds while Hong Xi, Zhang Hanxiang, the draconian sage, and Zhang Lie followed behind the golden mammoth.

The golden mammoth allowed them to follow behind her. She was a little scared, so having some companions would give her more courage.

The draconian sage grumbled, "What are you doing here, Zhang Lie? Go be with Sun Mengmeng!"  
Sun Mengmeng, again?

Zhang Lie turned to the others. "Has something happened to Sun Mengmeng?"

Zhang Hanxiang sighed. "That's why I keep saying Sun Mengmeng has a hard life..."

The others around him all shook their heads as well.

Li Feng was seated on a grassy field, his head inclined to look at the sky. He held a blade of grass in his mouth. "The autumn wind, brisk and refreshing; the autumn moon, clear and bright. The fallen leaves gather and disperse; the crows doze before startling awake. When will we meet again? I cannot bear this night."

Zhang Lie turned to the others. "What's up with him? He's a poet now?"

The draconian sage shrugged. "Two days after you set off, he became like this. I think he's done for."

The golden mammoth stepped forward, trembling. She murmured, "Your feelings I know, my feelings you share. Long I think and long I recall, in short instants you hold me thrall."

Li Feng suddenly raised his head and turned to her. "This night's stars are not last night's stars. For whom do the wind and dew wait the night?"

The golden mammoth replied, "My lingering thoughts, a spun cocoon; my naked heart, a fruit unpeeled."

Li Feng slowly stood up. "You're back, golden mammoth?"

The golden mammoth nodded. "I'm back, Li Feng."

Li Feng's eyes slowly lit up. "You came back alive!"

"I heard the draconian sage tell me that you missed me so much you were going crazy. I thought it was all a joke, but now I'm surprisingly happy. You've missed me all along!"

Li Feng smiled. "Of course I do. It's wonderful that you're back safe and sound. I worried that something might have happened to you on the battlefield."

"I miss you, Li Feng." The golden mammoth hugged Li Feng and raised him into the air in her excitement.

Li Feng hugged the golden mammoth too, but they were so different in size and stature that Li Feng was only able to hug part of her stomach. The golden mammoth was much too large; it was as though Li Feng were hugging a tank.

Li Feng shouted, "Ouch! My bones are about to break, to break!"

However, the golden mammoth didn't seem to hear him. She was completely carried away by her emotions.

"Li Feng, I thought of you so often on the battlefield, scared not of dying, but of never being able to see you again..."

Li Feng's face turned green as his bones creaked. The passionate golden mammoth, with her muscles of steel and arms like iron girders, was slowly crushing Li Feng to death.

"I'm really about to die!" he gasped.

Zhang Lie lost interest in the man and mammoth in their throes of passion, love, and death—but Zhang Hanxiang and Hong Xi watched on with gusto. They took out some sunflower seeds from their soulshards and ate them as they watched. Zhang Lie turned and left without disturbing them.

Thinking about how Zhang Hanxiang had mentioned Sun Mengmeng, and later that the draconian sage had also mentioned Sun Mengmeng, Zhang Lie suddenly decided to meet with her to see how she was doing, and what had happened to her since his departure.

He headed to her residence.

"When do you think Zhang Lie will return?" Sun Mengmeng asked.

Sun Xiaowu grumbled, "Sis, that's the 180th time you asked that! Please, calm down! You've repeated the same thing day in and day out ever since our captain left—spare me, won't you?"

Even though Zhang Lie and the Zongming world's forces had already returned, the draconian world had expanded to dozens of times its original size, and even the members of Team Zenith were incapable of extending their senses to the entire world.

As such, Sun Mengmeng had no idea that Zhang Lie had already returned. The only one who was able to detect everything happening in the world was its king, the draconian sage.

"Have I said it that many times already?"

"Yes, you have!"

"In that case, Zhang Lie must be coming back soon, right? When do you think he'll return?"

Sun Xiaowu groaned. "That's the 181st time!"

Sun Mengmeng frowned. "Aren't you overreacting?"

Sun Xiaowu countered, "How do you think you'll feel if someone repeats the same thing to you time after time for days on end?"

Sis, what's wrong with you? You've been like this ever since Zhang Lie departed!"

"Departed?" Sun Mengmeng clicked her tongue. "You make it sound as though he's dead! Say it properly!"

Sun Xiaowu groused, "Li Feng became a poet, and you a broken record! I've had enough of you. If you're so worried, go find the captain!"

"How can I? I wouldn't want to trouble him. Furthermore, it's been quite some time, hasn't it? I think Zhang Lie will be back soon. If I leave and miss his return, what am I going to do?"

Sun Xiaowu roared in outrage. "That's it! We've had this conversation far too many times. If you don't want to find our captain, I will. I will!"

Sun Mengmeng held him back. "How old are you that you're still threatening to run away from home? Zhang Lie told us that we members of Team Zenith can't show ourselves on the battlefield—that he has other plans for us."

Sun Xiaowu clutched his head in agony. "If we keep going like this, either you or I will go crazy."

Sun Mengmeng suddenly froze in the middle of the conversation. Her thoughts and words came to a halt. She turned her head and asked from the beginning, "When do you think Zhang Lie will return?"

"Argh! Save me, save me, Captain! Please, come back quickly so I don't have to deal with this!"

Just as Sun Xiaowu rushed out of the house, he saw Zhang Lie waiting outside.

"Hey, Xiaowu! Long time no see—you seem as invigorated as ever."

The moment Sun Xiaowu saw Zhang Lie, he was so shaken that he immediately knelt down and grabbed onto his leg. "Captain, you must have heard my pleas day and night to have come back so quickly to save me!"

Zhang Lie laughed.

"I need your help. Quick, come in with me. If my sister continues like this, I'll go crazy before she does." Sun Xiaowu dragged Zhang Lie into his house.