

U. Warlord 1121

Chapter 1121: The Unusual Xiagai

Huge boulders and world fragments formed a flood that threatened to swamp Sun Xiaowu.

"[Goldenscale Palm]!" Sun Xiaowu clenched his fists. His arms glowed with resplendent light, and a layer of dense golden scales emerged over his skin.

As Sun Xiaowu attacked, so too did the golden mecha.

The huge mecha's punch was even more striking than that from ten thousand of Sun Xiaowu's mecha clones striking simultaneously. It stopped the flood in one fell swoop.

"[Wheel of Time]!" Fang Yi's spear took on the aspects of time and age. Temporal winds buffeted the spear, and a mysterious light began to circle the spear like lightning.

A wheel of light appeared behind Fang Yi, taking on the form of a clock.

Countless insects flew out from Ghroth's body, a different species than the night devourers.

They were very small in size, comparable to pigeons. They had no eyes or face. Their segmented tendrils waved in accordance to some form of cosmic rhythm. Their ten legs were covered up by black, glowing tendrils, and the lower halves of their bodies folded up to reveal near-circular wings on which triangular scales grew.

The dense swarm of insects seemed to form a river amidst the void.

"What could these puny bugs do?" Fang Yi snorted disdainfully, spinning the spear in his hand as the effect of the wheels of time stacked up. He launched his spear, crackling with wind and lightning, with incredible force. It sent wind howling and lightning flashing through the sky.

He thrust his spear forward once more, so quickly it left hundreds of afterimages in all directions.

Sun Xiaowu invoked [Blinding Flash], summoning ten thousand clones to deal with the bugs. These clones weren't accompanied by individual mechas; these were the simplest clones he could conjure, made of golden light.

Sun Xiaowu's application of [Adamantine Aegis: Invincible Martial God] was yet somewhat unwieldy, and he couldn't conjure so many clones at that level. Otherwise, he would surely do so and combine them with [Blinding Flash: Echo of Origins] to augment the size of his golden mecha by another thousand times.

Although the golden mecha to his back was extremely strong, using it to deal with these small bugs was like trying to shoot down mosquitoes with a railgun. Indeed, the golden qilin he had previously summoned was no match for the numerous, swarming night devourers.

These bugs were so small as to be particularly annoying to deal with for the gigantic mecha.

After Sun Xiaowu summoned his clones, the miniature insects whirred and transformed in an instant.

The next moment, before Sun Xiaowu could react, the heads of the clones all exploded.

Fang Yi's eyes widened as he realized something and hurriedly fled.

Purple lightning crackled around Fang Yi's body and concentrated around his head. As he screamed in pain, he spat out charred black bugs from his mouth. Sun Xiaowu shivered upon seeing it.

Fang Yi grimaced as he explained, "These bugs can take over your brain."

"The Xiagai insectoids!" Wilbow, observing from afar, revealed the insects' name.

"The Xiagai?"

Yang Ze and Wilbow were trying to waste time and wheedle information from each other as they waited for an opportunity to strike each other. However, after having wasted so much time, they had lost all their motivation.

Wilbow explained, "As I've said, there are two species of insects that live within Ghroth's body. One are the night devourers, and the other are the Xiagai, bugs that can invade living entities' brains."

"Brainworms?"

Yang Ze shuddered at the thought of the frightening parasites.

Wilbow replied, "You can understand it that way. The Xiagai, through some mechanism or another, are able to access the brains of living entities. Initially, those controlled by the xiagai won't feel any different—but soon enough, they'll start to feel as though their actions have slowed down, and they might even start doubting themselves. It'll be written off as ailing responsiveness at first, but once they realize what's actually going on, it'll be too late. Part of their body will be controlled by the Xiagai."

Yang Ze grew alarmed. "The Xiagai can control humans?"

Wilbow nodded. "Indeed so. The longer the Xiagai remain in the brain, the deeper their control. Your companion is skilled to be able to detect the Xiagai so quickly. Many of their opponents are controlled without even realizing it."

Yang Ze gasped. "Truly a walking disaster—no, perhaps even a disaster made flesh! To have such catastrophes lurking in its body..."

Yang Ze's homeworld, Mars, had once suffered from an insectoid invasion, and he knew very well just how frightening they were. If allowed to grow, they were a force that could destroy entire planets.

In fact, the Xiagai that lived on Ghroth's body were even more frightening than the insectoid invasion that the Milky Way had suffered.

The insectoid invasion in the Milky Way had been dangerous because the insects could devour, evolve, and quickly reproduce. Even more startlingly, they were able to absorb the racial characteristics of the enemies they defeated, causing them to become exponentially more dangerous as time passed.

On the other hand, the Xiagai were particularly dangerous. They could directly invade other species' brains, frequently even without the host's knowledge.

By the time they made their presence known, the host would already be controlled.

From a scientific perspective, Yang Ze believed that the Xiagai had a specific ability that allowed them to burrow into others' brains.

Their sudden disappearance and transformation might be attributed to control over space, or perhaps rapid miniaturization of their body into nanoscale dimensions, allowing them to enter their hosts' brains, feed on them, and then slowly replace their hosts' brain function.

Through this means, they would gradually take over their hosts' brains. By then, if they were forcibly expelled, their host would immediately die.

Yang Ze shuddered. Even from what little he knew of these bugs, they were frightening to deal with. However, Wilbow wasn't done.

The Xiagai were a defensive mechanism for Ghroth to prevent his own body from being taken over, and he rarely released them to the outside world.

It was clear that Ghroth was shaken by the strength of these hunters, and he had been forced to expose this trump card.

Wilbow continued, "Allegedly, the Xiagai are pets fostered by the king of chaos, and might be lifeforms that originally lived in the world of primordial chaos.

Subsequently, the king of chaos bequeathed a swarm of these insects to Ghroth as a gift, and they took over his body.

On the battlefield, Sun Xiaowu was quickly edging away from Ghroth. He didn't want to become a parasitic host, not at all.

"[Goldenscale Palm: Split]!" Golden radiance struck the land. Sun Xiaowu's palms brimmed with golden light as a dense layer of golden scales covered his skin. His aura suddenly shifted, and his right arm glowed with resplendent light.

Sun Xiaowu took a step forward, then punched with all his might, generating a dominating wave of genetic energy.

The golden mecha behind Sun Xiaowu emulated his action. His punch formed a golden hurricane, one that felt as though it could pierce through an entire planet. A huge group of Xiagai perished.

After recovering, Fang Yi also struck.

"[Tiger's Howl, Dragon's Bellow]!" Fang Yi's spear took on the aspect of a dragon of the winds and a storm tiger as he charged forward...

Chapter 1122: A Single Thrust

A windstorm raged, and thunder crackled. The boost afforded by two wheels of time caused wind and storm to wrap around Fang Yi's body as though he were a spear, one that pierced through the swarm of insects.

At the same time, another wheel of time appeared to his back.

"[Goldenscale Palm: Qilin]!" Golden light burst forth from Sun Xiaowu's golden mecha. It cocked its arm in perfect synchrony with Sun Xiaowu's actions. As golden light brimmed and spilled throughout the void,

Sun Xiaowu's body rose into the air until he was directly before the golden mecha's chest. His arm grew larger as golden scales appeared over his arm, and the image of a golden qilin materialized behind him.

As Sun Xiaowu swung his fists forward, the golden qilin soared into the air, a hundred thousand meters long, almost as large as Ghroth was.

The qilin's scales were radiant and shining with golden light, each like a miniature sun. It looked like a god descending from the heavens, its long whiskers floating in the void, surrounded by golden clouds, looking like a sculpture of gold.

The golden qilin shot forward with Sun Xiaowu's unch, gleaming in a shroud of golden light. Just the light it gave off seemed like anathema to the Xiagai, which screeched and smoked and turned to dust when they were caught by the illuminating beams.

Fang Yi, surrounded by wind and storm, hurriedly retreated to avoid being in the qilin's path.

The golden qilin shot toward Ghroth, causing the void to tremble where it passed by.

The tsunami of steel, lava spouts, silvery-white and pitch-black lightning, the purple storm, the spatial rends, the meteor shower of world fragments—once again, Ghroth invoked a sixfold disaster.

Even though the combination attack slowed the golden qilin down, it was able to break through and continue charging forward, albeit at a slower rate.

Ghroth's eyes sparked with red light. A tribulation of thunder struck the center of the manifest disasters and finally suppressed the golden qilin's might.

Fang Yi shot out with his spear, surrounded by wind and lightning.

"[Heaven's Judgment]!" As purple lightning forked through the air, Fang Yi leveled his spear. Wind and lightning surged forth. The combination of wind and lightning generated a frightening force that seemed to be able to penetrate space, as though the spear had transformed into an electric saw.

A fourth wheel of time appeared behind his back, causing the wind and storm around Fang Yi to grow more intense.

The wind and storm revolved around Fang Yi at high speed, turning him into an electric saw that broke through Ghroth's defenses.

The Xiagai and night devourers appeared in full force. The night devourers themselves weren't too difficult to deal with, but the Xiagai were particularly annoying and frightening foes.

Even Fang Yi had to be wary of them—as a fifth wheel of time appeared to his back.

"[Wheel of Time: Break]!"

With a howl from Fang Yi, the wheel of time behind him broke in a shower of light.

Next to Fang Yi appeared a shadow of himself, one which suddenly merged with Fang Yi's body and gave him a tremendous boost to his strength. The wind and lightning circling the spear doubled in intensity.

As the next wheel of time broke, even more light flared from Fang Yi's back. A second shadow appeared, merged with Fang Yi, and boosted his strength, followed by a third, a fourth, a fifth...

As more and more wheels of time behind Fang Yi broke, more ephemeral shadows appeared and boosted his strength to an extreme. Wind and storm circled him five times over.

A dragon's roar resounded through the air like peals of thunder, scattering the solar storm. A wind dragon and a storm tiger appeared. Wind and storm combined and crackled at the tip of Fang Yi's spear.

Fang Yi leveled his spear. Wind and lightning surged forth. The wind drew out the might of the solar storm, and lightning infused itself into the solar energy, turning a bright gold. Fang Yi's strength was multiplied five times over by the wind and storm around him. His spear tore apart the dense swarm of insects, causing the void to explode.

Sun Xiaowu and Fang Yi, working together, managed to defeat the sevenfold disaster. The gigantic golden qilin struck Ghroth's body.

Scorching vapors and ash exploded. A golden ocean tore apart rust-red mountains and land, covering the entirety of Ghroth's planet-head.

Ghroth had suffered an attack stronger than anything he had ever faced to date, and its planet-head seemed as though it might break apart at any moment.

Wilbow gaped in shock. He couldn't understand how Ghroth had been so badly wounded.

The sevenfold disaster, which combined with the insect swarms, resulted in an unprecedented catastrophe.

After Sun Xiaowu loosed the golden qilin, the golden mecha to his back faded and turned immaterial, its energies exhausted.

"[Wheel of Time]!" Fang Yi's spear took on the aspects of time and age. Temporal winds buffeted the spear, and a mysterious light began to circle the spear like lightning.

A wheel of light appeared behind Fang Yi, taking on the form of a clock.

Fang Yi thrust his spear forward so quickly it left dozens of afterimages in all directions, faster than even a machine gun. It pierced through the insects flying his way.

As he attacked, Fang Yi retreated and asked, "Xiaowu, can you keep fighting?"

Golden light surrounded Sun Xiaowu and returned to his body in the form of genetic energy. Sun Xiaowu snorted. "I'm not like you, growing limp after a single thrust! Don't you worry about me!"

As though trying to prove that he still had excess energy, Sun Xiaowu stomped on the ground and shouted, "[Blinding Flash: Hundred Thousandfold Echo]!"

Sun Xiaowu's body split into over a hundred thousand clones, so many they seemed to fill the void. He had created a hundred such clones in a single breath, but these clones were far weaker than those he had produced when he only summoned a thousand or ten thousand clones.

These were merely constructs of unadorned genetic energy. It was clear that Sun Xiaowu didn't yet have the strength to control a hundred thousand clones, but even so, it was an impressive enough feat.

Summoning so many clones at once would be draining both mentally and physically, even if Sun Xiaowu had regained much of his expended genetic energy.

The hundred thousand clones swarmed toward the sevenfold disaster.

"[Heaven's Judgment]! [Tiger's Howl, Dragon's Bellow]!" A dragon's roar resounded through the air like peals of thunder. Wind and storm combined and crackled at the tip of Fang Yi's spear..

Chapter 1124: The Hunters Gather

Sun Mengmeng's arrows rained down in a meteor shower that tinted the air purple and gave the void a phantasmagorical appearance. The air turned dry and arid, as though a cataclysm was nigh.

Under the brilliant purple sky, everything began to burn, drowned in a sea of purple flame. Even the sixfold disasters were held back.

Sun Mengmeng suggested, "There's no need for us to dump all our energy into one massive blow. We can just take turns to strip each disaster off, one by one."

"I understand!"

As the snow fell, Zhang Hanxiang's palms glowed blue. Everything around her began to freeze, and winter's chill descended on the void. The bitter cold froze the lava.

"[Light's Bulwark: Draconic Fist]!" Li Feng punched forward, his right arm covered by radiant scales. A dragon of light materialized around his arm and roared, shattering the scorching-hot ocean of steel.

Sun Xiaowu shook his head. "This won't work. The attack's drawing near!"

"Shut up! Go rest by the side," Sun Mengmeng called back.

As Sun Mengmeng channeled her anger into her flames, her fire-attuned genetic energy exploded like a volcano.

Sun Xiaowu and Fang Yi shrunk back.

The black-and-white lightning and purple storm, interspersed with spatial rifts, drew closer.

"[Baptism of Hellfire: Full Moon]!"

Sun Mengmeng whirled her daggers all around her as a black moon rose into the air, shattering the black-and-white lightning.

Zhang Hanxiang swung both her arms in the air, conjuring needles as numerous as raindrops in a storm. However, in her panic, her attack failed to achieve the desired effect.

As Sun Xiaowu had said, it was untenable for them to get rid of the disasters one by one.

Sun Mengmeng and the other reinforcements weren't weaker than Sun Xiaowu and Fang Yi; they were simply not at peak performance from their recent fighting.

Further, although they had witnessed Ghroth's attacks, this was their first time encountering them for themselves, and they still needed some time to familiarize themselves with what he could do.

Ghroth was a far cry from Wilbow's brother, Whateley, or the planet-headed apostle in terms of strength. After all, he had been third in strength against all of the king of chaos' subordinates.

"[Light's Bulwark: Dragon's Teeth]!" Li Feng shielded Zhang Hanxiang. Concentrated light-attuned genetic energy surrounded him. A beam of light pierced through the purple storm and spatial rifts.

Sun Mengmeng cast [Black Sun], forming a cordon of purplish-black flame around her. She activated her most impactful soulshards for battle, transforming into a warrior of hell. The flames around Sun Mengmeng's body grew even taller and hotter.

"[Netherworld's Gaze]!" Hundreds of arrows, like beams of moonlight, shot toward the lightning of tribulation. Dense swarms of insects flew over. Zhang Hanxiang took the opportunity to attack, conjuring a field of icy flowers that froze them all.

After the fight in the white world, Zhang Hanxiang seemed to have grasped some higher principle. Her strength had been boosted considerably via her enlightenment regarding her elemental attunement.

"[Light's Bulwark: Meteoric Fist]!" An arclight dragon appeared behind Li Feng. He punched forward, and the dragon shot toward Ghroth like a bullet from a sniper rifle. The light dragon left behind a starry trail, breathtakingly beautiful.

Once again, however, Ghroth summoned a sixfold disaster. The starry bullet was expended against the might of the sixfold disasters.

As Sun Mengmeng, Zhang Hanxiang, and Li Feng frowned at how easily Ghroth had countered their attacks, a hundred thousand golden clones rushed forward in a battalion toward the manifold disasters.

They exploded one after another, illuminating the void in golden light. The sixfold disasters disappeared amidst the void.

Sun Mengmeng and the others turned to see Sun Xiaowu, radiant in gold, stepping forward.

"I can't bear to watch all of you fight any longer!" Sun Xiaowu shouted, grinning.

Thanks to their help in buying time for him and Fang Yi, Sun Xiaowu had recovered half his genetic energy and was able to continue fighting.

Sun Mengmeng scowled and thundered, "Keep resting! We can take him down."

Fang Yi strode forward, hefting his spear. "Enough. Who knows how long it'd take you to defeat Ghroth? Just buy me some time."

Li Feng grinned. "Are you going to use your signature thrust?"

"It's a spear strike!" Fang Yi corrected.

Li Feng glanced at him skeptically. "Given your current condition? Do you really have the stamina?"

"I have to hold out—I can't back down now. Hold on, what do you mean, my current condition?"

Li Feng replied, "Don't forget that we're around. If you need more time—we can definitely hold him off a bit longer."

Fang Yi shook his head. "Once we finish dealing with him, I'll have plenty of time to rest. I've recovered enough energy for a single strike."

Sun Xiaowu warned, "Don't try to resolve each disaster one by one, or we'll end up on the defensive. We have to take the initiative to strike."

While Sun Xiaowu was speaking, Ghroth launched another bolt of tribulation.

Sun Xiaowu's body flashed as a hundred thousand clones split from his main body.

"[Light's Bulwark: Earthbreak]!" Light-attuned genetic energy gathered on Li Feng's fist, compressing once and again. His fist began to glow with white light, and he launched a bolt of white light—only to have it be easily taken care of by a red bolt of lightning.

Sun Xiaowu's hundred thousand clones rushed forward, their fists clenched tightly. Golden light manifested around each fist, but before Sun Xiaowu could release his technique—

"Take my ultimate technique!" Fang Yi broke through the constraints of time and returned to the frozen world of gray, with him the only spot of color within.

The wheels of time to his back spun more and more quickly. Wind and lightning surged forth.

Wind and storm combined and crackled at the tip of Fang Yi's spear, imbuing it with sharpness and penetrating strength beyond measure.

Fang Yi compressed that energy again and again, until even the space around the spear started getting sucked in. The tip of the spear punched through space as though it were nothing more than paper.

The combination of elemental, temporal, and spatial energy at the tip of the spear multiplied the strength of Fang Yi's attack beyond what should have been possible.

The disparate energies boosted and augmented each other. Golden threads surrounded wind, storm, time, and space...

Chapter 1123: Special Effects Maxed Out

Fang Yi leveled his spear. Wind and lightning surged forth. The combination of wind and lightning generated a frightening force that clashed against the sevenfold disasters, as though the spear had transformed into an electric saw.

The wheels of time to Fang Yi's back rotated more and more quickly, but it was still difficult for him to defend against the disasters alone.

Fang Yi was sent flying by the clash as Sun Xiaowu's hundred thousand clones lit up with golden light.

"[Blinding Flash: Self-Destruct]!" Sun Xiaowu's clones exploded in a golden ocean of radiance.

The force of the explosion halted the sevenfold disasters. Golden blades rained down from all directions, clearing out the dense swarm of bugs.

Fang Yi retreated and asked Sun Xiaowu, "Can you summon one of those gigantic golden mechas again?"

Sun Xiaowu shook his head. "No, definitely not. I can't summon those whenever I feel like it. Given my current condition, if I forcibly activate the technique, it'd have at most a tenth of its original strength."

Fang Yi grumbled, "Don't you keep complaining that I go limp after one thrust? Aren't you the same?"

Sun Xiaowu rolled his eyes. "The difference is that I have stamina. Even after that transformation, I can still fight, as I am now. How about you?"

Fang Yi glanced at him seriously. "Without a strong opener, it'll be difficult to force a decisive victory. I need you to buy time for me."

Sun Xiaowu exhaled. "To be honest, I don't know how much time I can buy you."

After using his ultimate technique, Sun Xiaowu barely had any reserves of energy left, but Ghroth seemed perfectly able to continue fighting. Sun Xiaowu didn't know if he would be able to fend off Ghroth's attacks much longer.

Suddenly, the temperature in the void began to fall. Ice and snow appeared in the air.

"It looks like you're in need of some help," Zhang Hanxiang called out.

Sun Xiaowu's eyes widened. "Hanxiang, what are you doing here? What about the horde of genetic lifeforms?"

Zhang Hanxiang shrugged. "With Zhou Ying and Hong Xi around, I'm hardly necessary."

Sun Xiaowu glanced at the distant battlefield to find Zhou Ying and Hong Xi perfectly in control, having whittled down the number of beasts in the area and leaving Zhang Hanxiang without even an opportunity to attack.

Fang Yi said, "Hanxiang, I'm not underestimating you, but it'll be extremely difficult for you to handle Ghroth alone. Sun Xiaowu's about done for, and I don't think he'll be of much use."

Sun Xiaowu thundered, "What do you mean, I'm about done for? I could fight for another century!"

"Xiaowu, go rest—don't be stubborn. We know about your capabilities," Li Feng said, stepping toward them across the void.

Fang Yi asked, "Li Feng, where's your opponent?"

Li Feng spread his arms. "I dealt with him long ago!"

Sun Mengmeng also headed over. "It's just the two of you left."

Li Feng and Sun Mengmeng had clearly finished off their opponents already.

Sun Mengmeng continued, "Xiaowu, take a break. We'll handle this guy."

Sun Xiaowu acquiesced to his sister's suggestion.

Ghroth attacked once again, sending a tsunami of steel, lava spouts, silvery-white and pitch-black lightning, a purple storm, spatial rifts, and a rain of meteors toward the hunters.

"[Light Dragon's Remnants]!" Li Feng marshaled his genetic energy into the form of a large number of white dragons that struck the sixfold disasters, only for the dragons to be entirely annihilated.

Li Feng grew serious. Indeed, an opponent that neither Sun Xiaowu nor Fang Yi working together could take down had to be a challenging foe.

"[Lunarflame Shot]!" Purple flames burned over Sun Mengmeng's fingers, manifesting into three arrows. The energy in the three fiery arrows was so dense that they took on corporeal form. If not for the unusual heat they gave off, an ordinary bystander would never believe that they had been formed of flame.

Three arrows, brimming with purple flame, flew toward Ghroth like tracking missiles, only to be struck down by the sixfold disasters.

Zhang Hanxiang frowned. She launched a flurry of attacks, channeling the might and intensity of a blizzard, a snowstorm. The temperature dropped dramatically, and snowflakes floated down. Ice and snow spread all around her, but they were unable to defend against the might of the sixfold disasters.

Each of the sixfold disasters was able to destroy a large world, and the six combined could easily destroy a superior world. An attack that wasn't on that level would have no chance of defending against it.

Zhang Hanxiang and the other two hunters finally realized how exactly Sun Xiaowu and Fang Yi had failed to take down their foe. Against a monster of this caliber, it was impressive enough that Sun Xiaowu and Fang Yi had held out against Ghroth for all this time.

Sun Xiaowu called out, "Sister, we'll be fine as long as the three of you buy us some time!"

Fang Yi nodded. "Once we recover, we'll easily be able to take down this fellow.

Li Feng's face turned red. "Are you looking down on us?"

The three of them had claimed that they would quickly take down Ghroth, but their initial confrontation had been a complete defeat!

Didn't that mean that the three of them combined weren't as strong as Sun Xiaowu and Fang Yi?

No, Li Feng wasn't about to accept such a conclusion! He patted himself on the chest. "Take your time and rest. Leave the rest to us."

The sixfold disasters grew in strength as they bore down on the three hunters.

"[Dance of the Incandescent Wyrms]!" Li Feng summoned dozens of serpents, flaring with blinding light. The serpents rushed forward, but they were obliterated by a force that could level even a superior world.

Sun Xiaowu rolled his eyes.

Fang Yi called out, "Is this all you've got?"

Li Feng's flush covered his face and spread to his neck. "I'm simply a little tired after taking down my target so quickly! Be prepared—I won't go easy on my next strike!"

Li Feng wasn't wrong. Taking down his target had expended a great deal of his reserves. He had recovered a little while Sun Xiaowu and Fang Yi were fighting, but not to his peak strength.

With a shout, he summoned a suit of draconic armor, causing silvery-white light to flash from his body.

Sun Xiaowu shouted, "The special effects from this technique are amazing!"

"They're not all I've got," Li Feng replied. With a wave of his left arm, he summoned a brilliant, blinding totem of light in the air, like a nascent galaxy.

"[Arclight Dragon's Imprint]!" A gigantic dragon's claw shot forward in a pillar of light. Imbued with a large fraction of Li Feng's genetic energy, the pillar of light held the sixfold disasters back.

Li Feng laughed. "Haha, see? This is my true strength!"

However, the moment the pillar of light seemed to stabilize, a bolt of red lightning struck the sixfold disasters and obliterated the pillar of light.

"What?!"

This was the lightning of tribulation. Ghroth had used his attack at the most opportune moment to break through Li Feng's defenses.

"[Lunarflame Shot]!" Fire-attuned genetic energy burst from Sun Mengmeng's body as her body erupted in flames. She pulled her greatbow taut. Sun Mengmeng's right hand blurred as countless arrows of purple flame shot out of her bow like a meteor shower...

Chapter 1125: Each Hunter's Strengths

Temporal stasis only worked on the weak, with very limited effect on combatants on the level of superior kings. Even in Fang Yi's region of locked time, the various combatants on the battlefield could slowly, if arduously, move.

Three existences easily shrugged off the effect of the time lock: first, the king of keys, whose body was a world in its own right, and who was least affected by the imposition of external law; and second, Zhang Lie, whose strength was far beyond everyone else present, and who was two or three levels of strength above Fang Yi.

Fang Yi's temporal stasis had no effect on Zhang Lie whatsoever.

However, neither the king of keys nor Zhang Lie had any intention of interfering. They watched each other carefully amidst the void, neither making the first move. Their opponent was, and could only be, each other.

The third and final combatant on whom the temporal stasis had no effect was none other than Ghroth. Ghroth's planet-headed figure granted him some resistance against the temporal stasis, although much less so than the king of keys' natural resistance.

Fang Yi didn't expect much. He knew very well that combatants on the level of superior kings would be affected only to a limited extent, which was why he had notified everyone in advance and asked them to buy him whatever time they could.

Ghroth released a huge swarm of night devourers that drained the temporal energy around Fang Yi. They feasted on that energy and grew engorged. The night devourers were surrounded by gray fog, thunder, and storm.

Simultaneously, as the night devourers drained the temporal energy, the time lock was released.

Sun Mengmeng and the others found themselves able to move again, though not freely. They could clearly sense the resistance that they had to wade through, but they were strong enough to fight through it.

Sun Xiaowu's golden clones rushed forward. After the night devourers feasted on the temporal energy, they grew strong—and those insects that Sun Xiaowu's clones had easily taken down were now able to fight on equal footing with them.

Sun Mengmeng shot out a few arrows, but the night devourers, shockingly, were able to dodge them. After absorbing the energy of time, the night devourers were able to move more quickly.

"[Golden Divide: Deicide]!" Sun Xiaowu's golden clones struck simultaneously, their golden blades forming a flood.

The night devourers were able to move quickly enough to dart through the gaps between the blades, but the blades were so densely packed that they couldn't avoid them all.

"[The Nine Moons of the Underworld]!" Nine flaming moons appeared in the sky, illuminating the void. The temperature rose sharply as the nine moons fell and exploded amidst the sixfold disasters. Pitch-black flame spread through the void.

Zhang Hanxiang extended her arms. Snowflakes appeared in the air as the temperature of the void dropped dramatically. The ice and frost helped out Sun Xiaowu. It was so cold that even time seemed to freeze for a few moments.

The night devourers were frozen stiff.

Upon witnessing the state of the other insects in the swarm, those insects that had been lucky enough not to be frozen pounced on their erstwhile companions and devoured them whole.

Zhang Hanxiang frowned. "Cannibals!"

Sun Xiaowu's hundred thousand clones punched forward, shattering the space before them.

Frightening shockwaves of energy radiated through the battlefield, causing a large number of night devourers to explode on the spot.

Ghroth attacked once again, sending a tsunami of steel, lava spouts, silvery-white and pitch-black lightning, a purple storm, spatial rifts, and a rain of meteors toward the hunters.

Sun Xiaowu shouted, sharing his experience against this attack, "If you want to block his attack, you have to do so at full strength! Don't hold back, and don't try to weaken it layer by layer."

"Got it!" Li Feng nodded. A silvery-white glow, blinding in its intensity, exploded from his body. The shockwaves that emanated from his body were so intense as to distort space. They roared through the air like thundering dragons, turning the void white.

"[Light's Bulwark: Heavenfall]!" The light-attuned genetic energy morphed into a roaring river that poured down on the sixfold disasters like a flood. Thick, concentrated energy like sharp blades piercing heaven and earth fell from the void, disrupting the advance of the disasters..

The night devourers that had yet to perish, accompanied by the Xiagai, flew toward the hunters.

"[Lunar Apostasy]!" Sun Mengmeng's entire bow was blazing. She launched her arrows straight into the air, which exploded among the clouds and formed a black moon, exploding in the air, shooting down rays of moonlight, and killing the insects.

The night devourers devoured the flames filling the air. Zhang Hanxiang launched another attack, freezing a number of the bugs.

The ice that she controlled was particularly unusual, and even the night devourers weren't able to digest it.

"[Light's Bulwark: Thousand Dragons Soaring]!" As Li Feng yelled out, dragons of light materialized and circled his arms. As he punched upward into the sky, all his genetic energy condensed in his fists, launching dozens of dragons into the sky.

The dragons' cries sounded like peals of thunder as they swooped through the air, thousands of them in all.

The night devourers faced off against the dragons. After devouring the dragons, they would be bitten to death by others. The swarm of night devourers and horde of light dragons waged war for aerial dominance.

"[Netherworld's Torrential Flame]!" A frightening fan of flames poured out from Sun Mengmeng's bow, an attack far stronger than the moonlight she had summoned. The intensity of her technique shocked everyone.

The flames arced in the air and fell toward the battlefield in a waterfall.

The rate at which Sun Mengmeng shot out arrows was incredible. Even as the night devourers swallowed her arrows, more would pierce them through and perforate their bodies. They would be lit aflame by the flames and subsequently be burned to ash.

Ghroth's body shook violently as scorching-hot steel roiled around him, expelling ash and hot vapors through the void, as though he were surrounded by a huge cloud of gas.

Even against Sun Xiaowu's golden mecha or golden qilin, Ghroth hadn't reacted so adversely.

Ghroth's eyes were locked onto Fang Yi.

Fang Yi combined [Born of Lightning, Swallowed by the Wind], [Tiger's Howl, Dragon's Bellow], [Heaven's Judgment], and the power of karma—the greatest boon he had obtained from consuming Potion #4.

Wind, storm, time, space, and now the mysterious power of karma... All these sources of energy were stacked together, like buff after buff.

A dragon of purple lightning and tiger of green wind, shielded by a barrier of time and shrouded by black spatial energy, slowly began to manifest. This combination of energies was held together by

the mysterious power of karma. As Fang Yi poured more and more genetic energy into the attack, a storm roared into existence around him...

Chapter 1126: The Ultimate Disaster

As a font of disaster and even a personification of them, Ghroth had immense control over these disasters that he had birthed. Even mentioning the word "disaster" fell into his purview.

If all those third-realm existences who had touched the door of power had unlocked their own authority, an authority separate from that possessed by superior kings, that provided intuitive insight and command into a facet of natural law on a fundamental level—if the solar king's authority were the sun, and the ice queen's the frost, then Ghroth's authority was disaster.

He was the representative of disaster, its personification.

Even so, this representative felt an imminent disaster waiting to unfold from Fang Yi. If the disasters he could incite were sufficient to destroy a superior world, then Fang Yi's current strength was sufficient to destroy multiple superior worlds in succession.

The disaster that Fang Yi was about to unleash would even be able to kill him.

Ghroth couldn't help but panic then. Even when he was struck by Sun Xiaowu's golden qilin, Ghroth hadn't panicked. How could he, disaster manifest, be killed by a disaster? This was impossible. Ghroth couldn't remain calm. He summoned a sevenfold disaster.

"[Goldenscale Palm: Split]!" Sun Xiaowu released a frightening burst of energy, dyeing the void golden as a hundred thousand clones took to the air.

Sun Xiaowu punched with all his might, generating a dominating wave of genetic energy. His clones clashed against the sevenfold disaster, then exploded.

Golden waves of energy lit up the void and shook the sevenfold disasters to their core. Sun Xiaowu was treating his clones like bullets, exploding them in the heart of the disasters to destabilize them maximally. This approach was effective, but Sun Xiaowu's genetic energy was rapidly dwindling.

"[Lunarflame Shot: Ninefold Phantasmagoria]." Sun Mengmeng's surroundings began to burn with dark red flames as she launched yet another attack.

Nine purplish-black phoenixes rose around her and shot toward Ghroth. The black phoenixes swooped toward the target. Nine pitch-black flames exploded in the air like roses in a cavalcade of flame.

Zhang Hanxiang joined in. The three hunters, working together, held back the sevenfold disasters.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon]!" Li Feng leapt high into the air and landed on the arclight dragon's head, his sword gleaming brightly as though it had been dipped in liquid light. As he raised the sword to the skies, it glowed and expanded, morphing into a huge blade of light.

The energy from the light, soaring into the air, struck down the sevenfold disasters. The arclight dragon that Li Feng rode shot forward, shattering the lightning of tribulation.

The two species of insects swarmed out of Ghroth's body en masse, forming a huge ocean.

"[Lunarflame Shot]!" Purplish-black flames gathered on Sun Mengmeng's bow once again, forming an arrow of pure black.

The image of a golden garuda, limned in black, appeared behind her. As she loosed her arrow, it seemed to transform into a beam of light, moving so quickly that it bypassed the constraints of time and space, as though it could penetrate anything.

The black arrow passed through the ocean of insects, burning everything in its path.

The insects screeched shrilly as they burned. Sun Mengmeng's arrow passed through them and landed on Ghroth's body, burning him from the inside out.

Ghroth tried to quell the flames with his own strength, but he found himself unable to extinguish them completely. However, his body was large enough that the flames would take a while to spread and hinder his actions.

Zhang Hanxiang made her move, freezing a large portion of the insects.

Even without Sun Xiaowu launching a helping hand, Zhang Hanxiang and the others had gained some measure of experience fighting off Ghroth.

The only reason they had initially suffered against Ghroth was because they were inexperienced at fighting against him. Ghroth was a troublesome opponent, especially since they had gone in blind.

Despite the threat of Sun Mengmeng and the other hunters, Ghroth was still intently focused on Fang Yi, from whom he could feel the most significant threat.

Even though he hadn't yet struck, the billowing aura of power around him meant that he couldn't be ignored. Such was the strength of Fang Yi's ultimate technique.

Wind and storm combined with space and time, a whole new combination.

A spatial rift began to form where Fang Yi was standing. Fang Yi's spear, thrumming with the power of elements and time, was a weapon of legends. Formless lightning flashed over its surface, gathering near its tip. The dragon of winds and lightning tiger prowled about the spear.

Part of the energy from the spatial rift seeped into the lightning-attuned genetic energy, turning it into void lightning.

The pitch-black lightning began to spike and sizzle.

Wind and storm combined and crackled at the tip of Fang Yi's spear. Space was kneaded into a papier-mache ball. Silvery energy stuck together, barely visible, colorless and tasteless and shapeless, yet slowly but surely affecting the world. This was the nature of time.

The gold and black threads of karma continued to weave around each other, twining and twining until they formed a single thread of dark gold.

Dragon-like lightning, tiger-like storm, formless time, timeless space—those four disparate energies combined into a cohesive whole, tied together by this dark gold thread. The energies revolved around each other, summoning a howling gale surrounding a spatial rift.

The void lightning combined with the spatial rift that was forming and tore apart the space around Fang Yi. They merged and tangled with each other, space and time, wind and storm, beginning and end.

All that energy, combined with the karmic power that Fang Yi had sensed for the first time, led to an unbelievably mysterious combination, difficult to sense and harder still to understand. This was a force that belonged to a realm above Fang Yi's ken, somewhat like heaven's might, but completely different...

Chapter 1127: Karma and Fate

Since he knew that Fang Yi was charging up for an ultimate attack, there was no way Li Feng would give Ghroth the opportunity to disturb him.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon]!" Li Feng yelled out. He pulled out a blade from which light began to gather. As he struck, dozens of dragons fell from the skies like meteors, clashing against the insects that had emerged from Ghroth's body.

"[Lunarflame Shot: Extirpation of the Garuda]!" As Sun Mengmeng infused her genetic energy into the bow, the image of a garuda appeared behind her. Even before she released her arrow, frightening heat had gathered around her.

Huge chunks of ice all around melted into water. As she released her fingers, a human-headed, golden-winged bird shining with red light soared into the sky, its huge wings expanded. It began to pulse with red fire, brimming with such energy that it seemed as though it would set the world aflame.

Sun Mengmeng's attack scorched the void, dyeing everything in sight a patch of black.

Sun Xiaowu, having recovered his energy, summoned a hundred thousand shining clones, which formed an overwhelming battalion that charged toward Ghroth.

Ghroth retaliated with a sevenfold disaster, against which Sun Xiaowu had his clones self-destruct. Golden waves of energy shook the sevenfold disasters, and Zhang Hanxiang further quelled them by freezing the void.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon]!" Dozens of sword slashes emanated from Li Feng, each with a starry splendor reminiscent of the Milky Way. The stars in the night sky shone brightly with the sword slashes, imbued with the power of the vast expanse of the galaxy. The starlight was so bright, so splendid that it would make any onlookers dizzy.

Each slash struck one of the disasters. Dozens of slashes criss-crossed through the air in a vibrant array of starlight. The light-attuned genetic energy wove a web in the air that halted the tribulation of lightning.

Even so, the insects continued to approach. The night devourers fed on the remnant light-attuned genetic energy in the void.

"[Lunarflame Shot: Extirpation of the Garuda]!" Sun Mengmeng pulled her bow taut once more, infusing the rest of her genetic energy within. The image of a garuda materialized from thin air and, supercharged with Sun Mengmeng's energy, readied for a devastating blow.

Black flames gathered, lighting the very air itself aflame. The black flames formed a pitch-black abyss that no longer radiated light.

Instead, it sucked in all the light from the vicinity, as though the flames hid an endless, ravenous hunger like a black hole. The roaring flames birthed the energy of annihilation.

Even before Sun Mengmeng's attack landed in earnest, the Xiagai were unable to bear with the intense heat. Their bodies caught on fire, then emitted sounds like exploding bamboo. Either the water in their bodies had turned to steam and made them pop, or their cries were particularly unique—or perhaps both.

A fearsome garuda, manifested from Sun Mengmeng's bow, careened into them. The pitch-black flames exploded then, forming a frightening hurricane within the void.

Roaring black waves of flame shot straight at Ghroth, igniting his planet-headed figure aflame. The gaseous vapors emitted from his body exploded, turning him into a burning planet. The scorching-hot steel in his body began to boil.

With just one attack, Sun Mengmeng had cleared the battlefield and even hurt Ghroth.

Just as Sun Mengmeng struck, Fang Yi reached the final stage of his preparations. The power of his strike transcended both of its constituents, time and karma. The strike touched the notion of fate, that all things were predetermined in the long, winding river of time.

"Fate!" As the king of keys and Zhang Lie sensed this higher-order principle, even they had to put their fight on hold.

Zhang Lie couldn't help but grin. "He did it, the madman!"

While observing Fang Yi absorb Potion #4, Zhang Lie realized that Fang Yi had the potential of manipulating karma, but even he didn't anticipate that Fang Yi would achieve such a grand working as quickly as this.

He had managed to suffuse the power of karma into the disparate energies that he controlled. Although the resulting mix was a potpourri, the fact that he was able to invoke and evoke it was worthy of pride and praise.

That he could do so to any extent was shocking enough.

Even the king of keys praised, "Your subordinates indeed have marvelous talents."

Karma was prophetic, but it could be subverted and blocked. Fate, on the other hand, was trickier to avoid.

The combination of wind and storm, spatial force, void lightning, time and space, karma and fate—all of it combined into a hurricane. The eight different kinds of energy stacked on top of each other and were refined into a cocoon.

As Fang Yi infused more and more of his own energy into the attack, the threads of eight different colors began to separate.

In combination with the spatial rift that was forming, the void lightning tore apart the space around Fang Yi, causing the frozen world of gray to crumble bit by bit. The energies combined, somehow managing to stabilize the mix of energies that ran rampant around Fang Yi.

Fang Yi sent a stream of each type of energy swirling and corkscrewing around the tip of his spear.

The eight different types of energy formed a destructive vortex at the tip of Fang Yi's spear, giving birth to a mysterious hybrid power. As the forces continued to revolve around each other, the wheels of time behind Fang Yi began rotating more and more quickly as the space around him was strained to its utmost.

The wheels of time to Fang Yi's back began to break and crack, as did Fang Yi's own peak-grade spear. Even Fang Yi's own body was giving out. He bled out of his orifices, veins popping out on his forehead, the spear in his hand trembling almost uncontrollably.

Dragon-like lightning, tiger-like storm, formless time, timeless space—those four disparate energies combined into a cohesive whole. Golden flames manifested in the void. The resulting mix of energies was so potent as to be able to destroy natural law itself.

All around Fang Yi, space and time began to splinter and crack. Unusual pitch-black thorn-like protrusions appeared by the edges of Fang Yi's vision, seeming to skewer space.

The more advanced energies were particularly difficult to manipulate, especially the mysterious power of fate. Fang Yi could create a tiny portion of it, but it remained incomprehensible to him. It felt as though something were shifting in a dimension he had no access to.

Even before he could launch his attack, Fang Yi felt that his fate had shifted irrevocably. No one could say whether this was a blessing or a curse.

The king of keys frowned. "Your companion might be a genius, but he's simultaneously a madman."

The king of keys was referring to Fang Yi's manipulation of his own fate. No one could say what would happen if he were to continue using his ultimate attack—there was, for example, the possibility that he would simply just drop dead one day...

Chapter 1128: One Peerless Strike

Fate was one of the highest-order principles, and even the king of keys himself couldn't comment on it. Perhaps he would be able to sense it after he became the personification of the third realm as a whole, but at least for the moment, the king of keys had no power to steer or even read the threads of fate.

No one knew what would happen to Fang Yi in the future if he were to keep using this technique—perhaps a blessing, perhaps a curse.

This was why the king of keys called Fang Yi a madman. To recklessly use a power that he had no mastery over... Fang Yi was staking his own future as collateral each time he activated this technique, no, worse.

Collateral implied that it could be paid off, but no one knew how to pay off the hefty price of fate. This was the danger inherent to dealing with karmic power, but Zhang Lie didn't stop Fang Yi.

"Only a thin line rests between genius and madness." The cost of invoking fate might be dropping dead one day, but that was just one among many possibilities. Even the king of keys couldn't be certain.

Perhaps Fang Yi would become unlucky, or a crucial turning point in his fate would be distorted. No one could be certain of what would happen; turning this future uncertainty into present power was a trade that Zhang Lie would also have made if he had the opportunity to do so.

Zhang Lie believed that man could triumph over fate. Compared to imminent death, sacrificing a future fate was far more worthwhile.

Fang Yi's skin began to bleed. His capillaries burst, and blood gushed out of tears in his skin. The disaster-grade spear was splintering bit by bit.

Another disaster-grade spear shattered in Fang Yi's hands. Each time he launched this attack, a spear would be irrevocably ruined.

Ghroth's massive body began to move.

"[Birth of the Holy Dragon: Arclight Slash]!" Li Feng lifted his sword high above his head. A silvery-white dragon emerged from behind him, merged with the sword, and sent a beam of light piercing the skies. Li Feng struck, and the sword slash morphed into a dragon.

The sword struck and pierced into Ghroth's massive body, but was unable to resist the momentum of his advance.

Sun Mengmeng, Zhang Hanxiang, and Sun Xiaowu struck simultaneously, but even their efforts couldn't cause Ghroth to slow.

"[Heaven's Judgment: Godbane Strike]!" Fang Yi howled and sent the unstable mixture shooting forward, causing all that energy to erupt in an instant. The entire world seemed to come to a standstill at that moment.

A howling storm, void lightning, mysterious temporal charge, the wind of ages—the mishmash of elements exploded. The eight different energies formed a huge vortex, piercing through Ghroth's body and disintegrating it.

The tremendous explosion illuminated the void, but there were no subsequent shockwaves. Instead, a black hole formed and devoured the remnant energies, killing Ghroth.

The king of keys watched on as Ghroth perished. "It looks like the battle over there has concluded. It's our turn now."

Zhang Lie asked, "Aren't you going to save your companions?"

The king of keys countered, "Will you give me that chance?"

Zhang Lie smiled as he quietly considered the king of keys, his answer left unspoken.

Neither Zhang Lie nor the king of keys had begun fighting seriously. They were waiting for their companions to eke out a decisive victory, each worried that their indiscriminate attacks would strike their allies and hoping for their victory.

If either of them were to help out their companions, then the other party would take the initiative and seize that opportunity to strike.

Now that their companions' matches were over, there was nothing to worry about.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Soar]!" Zhang Lie clenched his fists tightly as blue genetic energy gathered around him. Ripples of genetic energy emanated from his arms. He flicked his wrists, spawning a frightening aura.

The skies suddenly darkened as a fish the size of a whale materialized in the air. A howling gale swept over the battlefield. As more and more genetic energy gathered around Zhang Lie's arms. It looked as though he were at the heart of a whirlpool.

A huge wave soared into the air. As Zhang Lie punched forward, the fish slammed its huge tail on the ground and sent a torrent of water surging into the air.

Ripples of energy spread out from Zhang Lie, warping the space around him. The towering waves looked like enraged black dragons, flooding the battlefield.

The king of keys absorbed the attack, sucking it into the myriad worlds he controlled. The attack exploded in the galaxy that formed his body, destroying thousands of worlds in a brilliant flash of light.

"[The Boundless Blade: Yawning Wave]!" Zhang Lie extended his pointer finger like a sword, and water-attuned genetic energy gathered around it. As he waved his finger, sword energy erupted like a wave, accompanied by a giant shark.

The king of keys sprayed out a huge number of world fragments, the aftermath of absorbing Zhang Lie's attack.

The countless fragments formed a frightening flood, smashing apart Zhang Lie's raging sharks. Zhang Lie counterattacked with sword energy, but the king of keys absorbed that too.

The king of keys' body consisted of countless worlds, and was essentially a miniaturized version of the third realm. It was incredibly large, and the king of keys was like a portal that connected one world to the other.

All of Zhang Lie's attacks would pass through that portal and enter the universe within. That universe was a vital part of him, but one that even the third realm couldn't support. His presence in the third realm was only a projection, a physical manifestation of sorts.

"[Ninecarp Transformation]!" A black serpent materialized behind Zhang Lie, by now so large and so developed that it resembled the world-swallowing serpent Jormungandr. It let out a threatening hiss as its scales clicked together.

The countless worlds glowed with light, and the resulting world's energy was emitted from the king of keys' body in a thick, dense pillar.

Only someone like the king of keys could use pure, concentrated world's energy as an attack. No superior king would be so wasteful—it was the equivalent of crafting weapons out of gold.

However, the king of keys could easily bear this cost.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!" Zhang Lie punched forward, and the black serpent behind him shot forth into the pillar of energy. The serpent's natural corrosion was able to erode the pillar, but it was so large and so dense that the greater part of it struck the serpent unscathed...

Chapter 1129: Repeated Clashes

The king of keys' pillar of world's energy was composed only of the energy of large worlds, but there was simply so much of it that Zhang Lie's serpent was hard-pressed to corrode it all away.

Only the king of keys could afford to be so lavish. No other superior king would be so wasteful with world's energy.

As Zhang Lie activated his blood ant and dragonwolf soulshards, he transformed into a dragonwolf with russet fur and limbs covered with dragons' scales. A dragon's horns grew out of his head, and his aura was magnified. A hurricane of blood and gusts of hot wind spawned around him.

The next moment, Zhang Lie vanished from the spot, dodging the king of keys' attack and appearing right before him. He attacked in a flurry of punches that morphed into a blood hurricane, but despite striking the king of keys, his attack had no effect.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!" As Zhang Lie punched forward, the blood dragon roared in rage. It shot toward the countless worlds that formed the bulk of the king of keys until it smashed into one such world.

A wave of annihilation exploded around the dragon. Pitch-black energy swallowed up everything in the vicinity like a storm, devouring one world after another.

The explosion was like a ravenous black hole.

Before the king of keys could react, Zhang Lie launched yet another attack. Blood-red genetic energy manifested around him.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Hundred Dragons Soaring]!" A horde of over a hundred black dragons launched out of Zhang Lie's left arm as he expended half his genetic energy in one supercharged attack.

Keening like peals of thunder, the horde of dragons smashed into the king of keys' manifold worlds. They were fierce and domineering, and all hundred of them boasted the power of annihilation.

They exploded upon contact with whatever world they encountered, spreading and adding to a frightening wave of annihilation. If the king of keys had bothered to craft the illusion of a face, it would have displayed a wretched expression.

The energy of annihilation swept a path of destruction through the worlds that formed his body, converting the world's energy it thus acquired into more energy of annihilation, which spread faster and faster.

A single blood dragon might not have been a problem, but Zhang Lie had released hundreds of black dragons, like mice that had found their way into a sack of rice.

The worlds that the king of keys had merged together before the battle were all destroyed. Zhang Lie's initial volley of attacks annihilated a third of the king of keys' worlds—and the fight had just begun.

In other words, Zhang Lie had almost instantly destroyed thirty million worlds, a rate beyond what the king of keys himself could accomplish even if he wanted to cull his worlds.

Zhang Lie unsheathed his sword. Sword energy billowed around him, tearing even space apart.

The sword energy struck the king of keys while he was busy trying to handle his internal galaxy, resulting in a pincer-type attack from inside and outside.

The king of keys grew enraged. The worlds within his body began to orbit erratically before time suddenly stopped. The energy of annihilation was forced to a halt, and each of the myriad worlds seemed to morph into eyes.

All the worlds formed a connected whole as natural law chained the various worlds together. In a state of extreme anger, the king of keys entered a combat-ready stance. Under ordinary circumstances, the tremendous energy he possessed was sealed away by the realm itself, which couldn't countenance an existence beyond natural law.

The unsealed king of keys was unimaginably speedy. As the worlds within his body moved at a hundred times their original rate, so too did the king of keys. The galaxy that was his body possessed its own rate of temporal flow and its own set of natural laws, which directly affected the king of keys' actions within the third realm.

From the king of keys' sped-up perspective, the entire realm seemed to have frozen, and all actions were as slow as a snail's crawl. Only one person was moving at regular speed.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!" Upon witnessing the king of keys accelerate, Zhang Lie had no choice but to follow suit.

Zhang Lie struck once more. An underworld river materialized in space, one so vast the entire world could see it. Everything turned cold, and the temperature dipped below freezing. Flakes of snow fell from the sky; it felt as though a gate to the underworld had suddenly opened.

As though the doors to the underworld had opened, thousands of ghostly specters emerged from within, forming a dense river. On careful inspection, those specters revealed themselves as demonic serpents in such quantities that would cause any witness to shudder.

The serpents surrounded Zhang Lie, blocking the king of keys' dramatically accelerated skill.

After the serpents perished, they transformed into a sticky, black substance before quickly condensing back into the form of serpents.

The king of keys was very shocked to realize that Zhang Lie could keep up with his hundredfold temporal acceleration, but that ability seemed to be restricted to him and him alone. The serpents' movement speed and regeneration speed couldn't compare.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!" Pitch-black energy immediately spread outward and suppressed the exploding smoke.

The combatants participating in the battle all looked up at the void, whereupon they found it wholly replaced by a pitch-black ocean.

Waves surged forward, sounding like peals of thunder, like stampeding hooves. The surface of the sea frothed with angry waves, like dragons emerging with the tide. The entire sea roiled, and

lightning crackled amidst the void. Countless serpents swam across the raging sea as lightning flashed ominously overhead, a scene right out of an apocalypse.

As Zhang Lie swung his sword, the roaring waves all morphed into black dragons.

The sea had transformed into a boundless battlefield. The sea breeze was as a horn to action, and the serpents, thousands of courageous soldiers heeding its call.

The king of keys pushed his temporal acceleration to the utmost, to thousands of times its original rate. World's energy manifested in the form of a solid punch, smashing into the demonic serpents in a hurricane of rainbow light and significantly distorting Zhang Lie's underworld river.

However, the demonic serpents that had been annihilated by the king of keys' attack quickly reformed in an endless tide, resulting in a stalemate.

"[The Boundless Blade: Dragon's Wrath]!" Zhang Lie thrust forward with Guicang, summoning a blood dragon.

A dragon's roar shook the void as the pitch-black genetic energy turned blood-red. The underworld river roiled, forming a gigantic blood dragon, its jaws wide open and its claws poised to swipe.

It was formed from genetic energy and a thick, coiling mass of blood-colored serpents.

Even the king of keys was forced to retreat within his bubble of accelerated time...

Chapter 1130: The Soul of Keys

The king of keys moved so quickly it was almost as though he were teleporting through space.

"[First Form: Parting the River]!" Bright sword energy radiated from Zhang Lie like brilliant rays of sunlight, illuminating the entirety of the void.

A frightening force descended on the king of keys, energy rumbling and rippling around him. As Zhang Lie swung the blade in his hand, a huge slash of sword energy shot toward him.

The king of keys had avoided the blood dragon's attack, but he was unable to avoid the barrage of pale-white sword energy that shot down toward him from above. His body was sliced into ribbons, causing the eyes that his worlds had transformed into to burst apart.

"[Shadow and Light]!" Zhang Lie whirled around. Time suddenly sped up in the vicinity of Zhang Lie, and he caught up to the king of keys in an instant.

As sword energy filled the air, the king of keys blocked what attacks he could with world's energy. The two combatants reached the upper limit of time dilation within the third realm, and even the members of Team Zenith could no longer follow the rhythm of battle with their eyes.

Zhang Lie and the king of keys fought on a whole different level entirely, and the members of Team Zenith couldn't hope to support Zhang Lie in battle.

Zhang Lie drew his second blade, which flashed with light. Caught unawares, the king of keys didn't dodge in time. The attack struck his body directly, causing yet another swathe of worlds within it to explode.

"[Syzygy]!" A burning black sun rose behind Zhang Lie's back, and a bloody moon flared into existence at his feet. Under the combination of the two auras, Zhang Lie seemed to have transformed into a god.

His aura was magnified tenfold, and a halo of black sun appeared above his forehead. Natural law seemed to warp around him. Runes likewise appeared on the bloody moon by his feet, forming an intricate array.

Struck by the bloody moonlight, the king of keys' radiance grew dim. Under the black sun, the fluctuations in Zhang Lie's genetic energy were enhanced.

Zhang Lie crossed his twin blades. The blood moon resonated with the blade in his left hand, and the black sun with the blade in his right. He simultaneously slashed forward with both blades, forming a huge celestial web around the king of keys.

Struck once more, the king of keys had barely half his original number of worlds remaining. He ignited the world's energy he commanded, forging it into a frightening torrent.

"[Blade of the Heavens: the Sea Swells]!" Energy poured out of Zhang Lie in waves, honing the edge of his blade. The pulses of energy struck the sea like a tsunami, devouring everything within.

Zhang Lie's attack smashed into the king of keys' stored energy, unleashing shockwaves in the void that devastated the surroundings. Despite being far in the distance, the members of Team Zenith quickly scattered to avoid the aftermath of the attack.

The members of Team Zenith, who were all gravely exhausted from their fighting, would be heavily injured by these shockwaves alone.

The king of keys grew even more enraged. Despite using all his tactics, he was still no match for Zhang Lie.

Subsequently, Zhang Lie followed up his attack without giving the king of keys any chance to catch a breath.

The king of keys thought that he had overestimated Zhang Lie before the battle, only to belatedly realize that he was still underestimating him instead. The king of keys had initially expected that Zhang Lie would simply be one or two levels beyond an ordinary superior king of antiquity—but Zhang Lie turned out to be far stronger.

"[Blades, Reverberate]!" A blood dragon materialized around Zhang Lie. Energy poured out of him in waves, honing the edge of his blade. The pulses of energy struck the realm like a tsunami, devouring everything within.

The twin blades Guicang and Hanguang emitted a fearsome aura, shining as brightly as the sun and moon.

Sword energy materialized from Guicang into a blood dragon that revolved around his body. Hanguang's light coalesced into a black dragon that likewise curled up around him. The two dragons, coiling together as one, shot out toward the king of keys like a hurricane, bearing down on him with the might of Zhang Lie's spiritual sea between them.

Infused with the blood moon and the black sun, the twin dragons formed a black whirlpool. Tremendous suction, like that from a black hole, sucked up everything around the two combatants.

As the pitch-black storm grew fiercer, the air around the battlefield turned dark. The members of Team Zenith wobbled unsteadily on their feet, once again realizing the limits of Zhang Lie's strength. If they recklessly tried to participate in the fight, they would only hinder Zhang Lie from unleashing his full might—and they might perish just from the remnant waves of energy that resulted from his attacks.

Against Zhang Lie's strength, the members of Team Zenith, who were readily able to overcome even the superior kings of antiquity, would nevertheless be as weak as paper.

The king of keys was mired in the center of a hurricane. The void shattered around him, and the majority of the worlds he commanded were annihilated. World's energy gushed out from his body, but was still unable to prevent the suction of Zhang Lie's attack.

"Let's end it here!" 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. "[Second Form: Piercing the Soul]!"

The ethereal attack didn't possess the blinding light of Zhang Lie's [First Form: Parting the River], nor the overwhelming awe of his [Blades, Extinguish]. Even so, the might of that spiritual energy shook the bystanders.

Against the mass of that spiritual energy, the members of Team Zenith felt small and insignificant. Zhang Lie activated his dragon's eye soulshard as he took in the full force of the king of keys' soul.

The multicolored soul was larger than that of any other lifeform he had previously seen, so large that even Zhang Lie's own soul, which had survived two lifetimes, couldn't compare.

The size of one's soul represented its strength—given that the soul was whole and healthy.

The king of keys' soul was not one such. Various wills seemed to be haphazardly stuck onto bits and pieces of that soul, the leftovers from the king of keys' indiscriminate merger of the wills of countless worlds.

This was what led to the incredible size of the king of keys' soul. However, these wills were rapidly decaying and shattering as Zhang Lie's attacks destroyed the integrity of the king of keys' galaxy.

The effects of [Blades, Extinguish] continued to wreck the king of keys' body from the inside out, finally revealing the heart of his soul.

Without being able to cut through his soul, Zhang Lie's [Second Form: Piercing the Soul] would have dramatically reduced effect, as though his strike were landing on armor.

When he saw the king of keys' exposed soul, however, Zhang Lie was stupefied...