

U. Warlord 1211

Chapter 1211: A Sudden Anomaly

Yang Ze cried out excitedly, "Wonderful! The high-dimensional spaces are being restored, and the situation is already improving. In just a little time, the will of the world will be able to restore it all."

The restored will of the third realm was far stronger than its fragmented version, and the restoration of the deepest layers of space was complete within mere moments. The restored will was efficient and potent.

Yang Ze sighed in relief. "You were right, Captain. This was an effective solution, and the will of the third realm was the best choice for restoring itself."

Just as the crowd was about to relax, a loud roar rang out amidst the multicolored sky, and the whole world seemed to shake. A monster wreathed in black flame arced into the air.

Zhang Lie stared at it seriously, only to realize that it was the special lifeform that had been in the farm on the draconian world.

That lifeform was rapidly growing in power beyond the limits of a monarch-grade lifeform.

Zhang Lie was astounded that it had managed to break through using the blessing of the restored will—and that it was now rushing into the air in an attempt to launch a sneak attack on the will and on Zhu.

It would be difficult for Zhu and the will to respond while they were focusing on restoring the deepest layers of space.

It had taken an immense feat of labor to finally unify the three thousand worlds. If this lifeform were to successfully launch a sneak attack on Zhu and the restored will, the unified world would perish, as would the third realm as a whole.

Zhang Lie wasn't about to sit back and let such a tragedy occur.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Soar]!"

Pale blue genetic energy rippled about Zhang Lie's arms. He flicked his wrists, causing a frightening aura to descend on the world. The skies began to darken, and a fish the size of a whale materialized in the air.

A howling gale swept over the land. 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.

Ripples of energy spread out from Zhang Lie, warping the space around him. The towering waves looked like enraged black dragons, flooding the land and blocking the special lifeform's path.

A huge rumble shook the heavens, and the entire world quaked.

As the waves burst apart, the air filled with echoes of Zhang Lie's signature genetic energy, the tide causing explosions that shook the air. The special lifeform was forced back.

As the pale-blue tides burst in the air, Zhang Lie appeared before the special lifeform, hovering in the air.

The special lifeform had not yet reached the next grade of lifeform, but it was clearly beyond that of a usual monarch-grade one.

Its eyes, filled with desire, stared avidly at the will of the world and at Zhu. Zhang Lie understood what was going on immediately.

It wanted to devour the restored will and Zhu to grow stronger, to take the last step to ascend beyond monarch-grade. It hadn't considered what would happen to the world and the realm afterward.

"Captain!"

The members of Team Zenith rose into the air in an attempt to help him.

Zhang Lie called out, "The lifeforms are escaping from the farm!"

The lifeforms of the farm, which had been reared in captivity, were generally more docile than those in the wild, but they had all gone on a rampage owing to the influence of the special lifeform.

"There are over a dozen monarch-grade lifeforms out there. Stop them!"

The rampaging monarch-grade lifeforms could easily and unintentionally stomp careless aliens to death.

The members of Team Zenith nodded and rushed off to stop the lifeforms.

After the restored will's blessing, the special lifeform had evolved once again, changing its appearance. Its new body wasn't particularly large, but it was covered with golden scales.

The scales looked as though they were made of gold, and gleamed with resplendent light. The pressure that wafted off the lifeform was like that of a hill.

A ferocious head popped out from among the special lifeform's armored body, as though it were a golden lion encased in armor.

With a tremendous roar, golden radiance swept over the land as the special lifeform pounced forward.

As it did so, the land cracked apart. Its golden claws were charged with such killing intent that many of the aliens and hunters were frozen stiff. They were blown away by a gust of golden wind.

Boulders large and small were hurled into the air and sent smashing toward Zhang Lie.

Zhang Lie waved a hand, sending the storm back toward the special lifeform.

He darted among the rocks and landed on the golden lion's body as naturally as though he were a floating leaf, then grabbed it by its mane. "We'll have braised lion tonight, I suppose."

The special lifeform roared, emitting a wave of light from its body that flung Zhang Lie away. With a hum, pale-blue genetic energy formed a ball around Zhang Lie's hands.

"[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 special lifeform blocked the blow with a shield of glittering radiance.

It vanished from the spot and barely avoided Zhang Lie's attack. It reappeared far away, wary of the opponent whose blow it had barely avoided.

It roared once more, so loudly and ferociously that the bystanders below felt as though their souls were about to be expelled from their bodies. The fight between Zhang Lie and the special lifeform took place over a battlefield of unparalleled size.

The golden lion howled again. Its new genes had yet to solidify and stabilize. Its armor cracked open to reveal nine different heads: a dragon, a snake, a turtle, a tiger, a bird... the nine heads howled as one, sending nine waves of golden radiance through the sky.

The ground cracked, and the weaker hunters fell to their knees.

Zhang Lie resisted the attack at full force, then counterattacked. Man and beast chased each other for hundreds of miles as the battlefield grew larger and larger.

The nine heads roared again. The sound waves took on physical form, and golden ripples covered the air.

As Zhang Lie and the golden lion fought each other off, moving rapidly from one place to the next, the golden waves caused the surrounding low-lying mountains to crack and fall, and some boulders even burst apart into powder.

The bystanders, who had followed the fight as it progressed and moved, were staring open-mouthed and shivering.

The golden lion's body was that of an apex predator, and its claws had the power to destroy mountains. When those claws smashed into Zhang Lie's fist, the resulting boom could be heard all throughout the world, not unlike peals of thunder.

As the lion's body smashed into Zhang Lie's, radiant light encapsulated both combatants...

Chapter 1212: Against Nine Heads

The golden lion's nine heads all widened their jaws to reveal incisors over a meter long. Gleaming golden light shot right by Zhang Lie's face, scraping his skin and cutting off a few strands of hair. Far into the distance, where the light struck a mountain, the mountain crumbled.

Zhang Lie's heart thumped as he converted his pale-blue genetic energy into a pitch-black version.

"[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.

His fist smashed into the golden lion's incisors with a tremendous clang, as though he had struck steel, or as though a heavenly drum was beating out a rhythm through the skies. The spectators' hearts thumped in sync.

The man and lion fought and fought and fought, summoning winds around them from nothing but the force of their blows. The unified world shook and trembled.

As they clashed again, the golden lion roared, sending a bombardment of sound waves at Zhang Lie. Gritting his teeth, Zhang Lie weathered the assault.

Struck by battle-frenzy, Zhang Lie was fighting as much like a beast as a man. Heated blood pumped through his body, and his eyes were those of a predator's.

As he punched forward, the black serpent behind him shot forth.

The special lifeform, surprised by the attack, reflexively dodged at extreme speed. It morphed into a bolt of golden light that pinballed through the air, dyeing the entire sky gold.

Despite how rapidly it moved, however, the serpent shot forward with destructive energy, cracking a mountain as it shot through its middle.

Dust billowed into the air as a cloud, revealing an ashen lion that had once been golden. Large patches of scales had fallen off its body, and one of its heads had almost been smashed open. A terrible wound marred its body, and flowing blood dyed one of its eyes red.

The lion's howls were like thunder. Shining brilliance drowned the sky in gold.

As Zhang Lie activated his blood ant and dragonwolf soulshards, he transformed into a dragonwolf with russet fur and limbs covered with dragons' scales. His aura became magnified as a hurricane of blood spawned around him.

The next moment, Zhang Lie vanished from sight and appeared before the lifeform.

He couldn't help but be shocked by the monster he had cultivated.

The special lifeform was even more astounded than Zhang Lie. It had thought itself the strongest lifeform in the world; once it swallowed up the will of the realm from the heavens above, it would be invincible. Even so, despite its evolution, Zhang Lie was able to suppress it.

Smoke filled the air.

Zhang Lie launched his strongest attack. Within the clouds, lightning crackled. A huge burst of light dissipated the mist and smoke.

As expected of a lifeform beyond even monarch-grade... Although it hadn't yet truly broken through the threshold, its combat prowess was no laughing matter.

The spectators were shocked.

Despite Zhang Lie's ridiculous strength, even he was unable to seize a decisive victory against the golden lion, and they were tussling through the clouds.

This would be a dangerous close-combat fight.

Zhang Lie rode the lion, gripping its mane tightly as he launched attack after attack at the largest of its heads.

Just then, the golden lion howled again. A ball of light—a miniature golden lion—shot out toward Zhang Lie with devastating force.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Fade]!"

As Zhang Lie punched forward, a blood dragon roared in outrage and shot forward.

The blood dragon and miniature lion crashed into each other, and the frightening energy that lay dormant within the blood dragon's body surged out.

A wave of annihilation exploded around the dragon. Pitch-black energy swallowed everything in the vicinity like a storm at sea, covering up the sky.

The explosion was like a black hole that sucked up everything in sight, land, sea, and sky alike.

The energy of annihilation was so intense that it even affected the multicolored dragon scale in the air, causing natural law to distort around it.

Zhu and the restored will were still in the process of solidifying their newfound strength and fixing the hole in the third realm; the energy of annihilation destabilized everything around it indiscriminately.

Zhang Lie hurriedly canceled the attack, causing the pitch-black energy of annihilation to be unable to finish off the special lifeform in one blow.

Even so, the golden lion was barely still alive.

Zhang Lie didn't want the golden lion to be destroyed completely, either—he wanted to consume its carcass for gene fragments.

The golden lion widened its maw and shot out another ray of golden light, resplendent with energy.

"[Fists of the Silent Sea: Hundred Dragons Soaring]!"

A horde of dragons launched out of Zhang Lie's left arm as he expended half his genetic energy in one supercharged attack.

Howling with the force of thunder, the hundred dragons soared through the air. They were fierce and domineering, and all hundred of them boasted the power of annihilation. The golden lion's might was suppressed head-on.

If not for Zhang Lie's fear of destroying the golden lion so completely that not even parts of its flesh remained, the golden lion would have been pulped.

Zhang Lie grabbed its mane with one hand and smashed a fist into its skull with another in an outpouring of genetic energy.

The golden lion howled, its skull caved in and almost cracked entirely open.

Its golden fur stood on end; one of its heads suddenly grew multiple times larger, like a golden millstone brimming with light.

It opened its maw, transforming the air before itself into a crackling ocean of lightning.

Zhang Lie unsheathed Guicang and split the ocean into two. In fear, the golden lion tried to run, but it was too late. The two heads to its left were chopped off in a fountain of blood.

The golden lion roared again. Fearful and unwilling to resign itself to its fate, it immediately retreated.

With another slash, two more of its heads on the right were chopped off. The golden lion howled in pain. Even so, despite the injuries it had sustained, the special lifeform was gradually growing stronger.

Fighting with Zhang Lie was like an extreme form of training, and its potential was now being squeezed out under life-threatening danger...

Chapter 1213: A Sustained Fight

Zhang Lie had apparently become a whetstone for the nine-headed lion.

"Be careful not to grind yourself to nothing!" Zhang Lie's sword flashed as he slashed forward horizontally.

Blood sprayed everywhere. The nine-headed lion had gained significant fighting experience after the short stint of combat. As Zhang Lie attacked, it leapt high into the air and avoided the devastating blow.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!"

The temperature of the air dropped to sub-zero values, and a strong wind buffeted the two combatants. Blood-colored frost appeared around them.

An underworld river materialized in the air. As though the doors to hell had just been thrown open, tens of thousands of serpents rushed out in a flood.

The lion agilely executed a backflip, retreating hundreds of meters in an instant. It landed on the ground with a huge crash, smashing a crater in the ground where it stood. Its body glowed with radiant light. Suddenly, a wave of black fog rose up from the ground, morphed into a hurricane, and surrounded the lion.

The lion sucked in a breath and seemed to expand multiple times in size. Its muscles bunched up around its body as it charged forward. Where it stepped, the ground cracked. Huge boulders were sent flying into the air, threatening to drown Zhang Lie in the resulting bombardment.

The nine-headed lion pounced toward Zhang Lie.

"Open!" Zhang Lie shouted. He stomped on the ground with both feet and rose into the air, looking for a moment like a martial god.

A vertical slash bisected the momentum of the charge and cut off the lion's golden claws. The nine-headed lion glared at Zhang Lie; from its wounds emerged a massive pair of hands that swung toward Zhang Lie with lightning's blistering might, as though intending to crush him into meat paste.

The lion had combined its physical strength with the energy it had retained from its sudden evolution.

The two combatants clashed. The lion's hands, which were about to enclose Zhang Lie, suddenly contorted. The lion howled in pain.

A sword had pierced through its flesh, sending blood fountaining from the wounds.

The lion howled again, and the dark clouds of energy surrounding it grew even more solid than before. They transformed into a black timepiece, one which tolled loudly and sent Zhang Lie stumbling back.

Zhang Lie slashed at the timepiece with his sword, resulting in a huge toll that resounded for over hundreds of miles.

The golden light radiating from the lion dimmed and turned umbral. Within mere moments, the nine-headed lion had undergone another evolution—a minor one, but one which left it just a hair's breadth away from the next grade entirely.

It howled once again, beating on its chest with its heads held high. The timepiece shot toward Zhang Lie as the umbral light grew more intense and surged at him.

Zhang Lie's eyes brightened. The stronger the nine-headed lion became, the more benefit he would receive from killing it. Indeed, Zhang Lie's best-case scenario was for the lifeform to break through to the next grade, which would provide Zhang Lie with higher-grade gene fragments.

The timepiece was too large, and flying too quickly, for Zhang Lie to dodge. As he landed on the ground, he was beset by the timepiece and trapped within.

The nine-headed lion repeatedly smashed the timepiece with its fists, causing it to toll loudly with every strike. The sound was so loud as to be ear-splitting; the lion was trying to quake Zhang Lie to death, to turn him into a pile of mush.

However, the lion's attempts were ineffective. Zhang Lie's feet sunk down into the ground, as though rooted, and he resisted the effects of the timepiece.

The timepiece let out a curious hum, as though this were some form of religious rite, as umbral light flooded it.

"[The Boundless Blade: the River Lethe]!"

Pitch-black energy immediately spread outward and smashed the timepiece apart from within.

The nine-headed lion's body was flung up into the air, where it smashed into a mountain and began to vomit blood.

An ocean of genetic energy swallowed up the sky, shrouding even the multicolored light emanating from Zhu. A pitch-black ocean appeared in its place. 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 struck, an underworld river hurtled into existence, roaring into the sea. The sword energy roiled like black waves. The sea had morphed into a boundless battlefield. The sea breeze was as a horn to action, and the serpents, thousands of courageous soldiers heeding its call.

It took a long time before the nine-headed lion was able to get back to its feet, at which point it roared in outrage and charged forward once more. Its limbs were glowing with light, and scales accumulated over its arms in layers. It looked particularly wild and violent.

The unified world made a move then. The nine-headed lion, in a feat of extreme strength, lifted up the entire mountain and threw it toward Zhang Lie.

Even more shockingly to the onlookers, however, the human male was equally strong. He withstood the attack with shocking might and majesty.

The world itself shook—not just the land, but also the onlookers.

The fight between man and beast shook heaven and earth, and it had far surpassed the limits of the third realm. The two combatants exchanged dozens of blows. Zhang Lie's serpents weren't able to get close to the lion, and dematerialized when struck by the waves.

Zhang Lie's fingers wrapped tightly around one of the lion's claw tips, then flung it up into the air and smashed it into a mountain of rock.

The onlookers watched in stupefaction—Zhang Lie was so much smaller in comparison to the lion that it seemed impossible for him to have done so.

The nine-headed lion roared; its claw tip had been broken.

Zhang Lie grabbed ahold of another claw tip and raised its body once more, smashing it down on another nearby mountain. Dust and smoke rose into the air as huge boulders rained down from the top of the mountain, almost burying the lion alive.

The lion roared again. After having suffered repeated attacks, its body shrank down to a few dozen meters in size.

Zhang Lie's eyes lit up. He rushed forward and began pummeling at the nine-headed lion's prone body.

This time, he grabbed the lion by its wrist and smashed it against the ground, causing cracks that grew dozens, hundreds of meters long.

Subsequently, he picked it up by its head and hurled it all the way toward the horizon. Where it landed, a huge thud echoed all the way back where the onlookers were standing, and the horizon itself seemed to shake.

Just how much strength was hidden in Zhang Lie's body?

Chapter 1214: An Exhilarating Battle

To think Zhang Lie was this strong... he was hurling a nine-headed genetic lifeform that was nearly a hundred meters tall back and forth like it was nothing more than a scarecrow. This was an insane feat.

The nine-headed lion's arm suffered a compound fracture. The lion roared, tore off its arm and swallowed it, and a new white tiger's claw grew back in its place.

Zhang Lie frowned. "Are you supposed to be a lizard?"

The nine-headed lion flashed with white light. Gusts of wind surrounded it as it sent hundreds, thousands of tons of rock into the air.

It clashed against Zhang Lie once and again, claws against fist, as those rocks were sent flying all around the two combatants.

The lion roared, spraying out a burst of silver light. Killing intent filled the air. Zhang Lie blocked the attack with a burst of energy. Behind him, a mountain collapsed and exploded, the rock turning into smithereens.

A huge white claw slammed down on his body, but Zhang Lie dodged it. A huge trench formed where the claw landed, the bottom of which couldn't be seen from up above.

The lion attacked fiercely. After its battle to the death against Zhang Lie, it had grown accustomed to its post-monarch-grade body. Every part of its body could be used as a weapon—even with its back to Zhang Lie, it could strike at him with a flick of its tail.

Its ferocity shocked everyone.

Zhang Lie countered with his fists as he manifested a huge serpent formed out of annihilation itself. It shot toward the nine-headed lion.

The lion sprayed out a burst of white light, shining with metallic luster, as it charged at the serpent. A huge explosion rang out, and the land where they stood transformed into a swamp.

The lion howled, its eyes cold. It leapt up and pounced toward the serpent once more.

As a genetic lifeform, battle was imprinted in the core of its being. As it leaned into its intuition, its attacks turned fiercer, more domineering; no genetic hunter could match its instincts.

Zhang Lie smashed forward with a punch, causing both combatants to quake. A meteor's worth of energy exploded in mid-air, and the ground quaked as though a volcano were about to explode.

The members of Team Zenith watched the battle between Zhang Lie and the lion in amazement. They thought that they were already at the peak of the third realm in terms of strength, but they would surely have been vaporized immediately if they tried to jump into the battle between man and beast.

Even among the fourth realm, there were hardly any hunters who could match the intensity and raw strength of this battle.

The nine-headed lion roared again as 28 sharp blades grew out of its back at even intervals along its spine, each with a silvery-white sheen. Killing intent filled the air.

The blades stood like pillars separating heaven from earth, thick and ice-cold, giving the onlookers a chilling sensation. The blades were ridiculously massive, and unusual phenomena were occurring around them. Blood was starting to appear on each blade. It was a frightening sight.

The nine-headed lion roared as it pounced forward, and the 28 blades all turned toward their target. They gathered in a square around the lion and shot toward Zhang Lie simultaneously.

The bloodstained blades, suffused with an aura of calamity, approached Zhang Lie at breakneck speed.

Zhang Lie swung his own blades with the resplendence of dawn, defending against the sudden assault.

Light covered the land like an intense meteor shower. Formless ripples shattered rock and cleaved mountains, shocking all onlookers once more.

Guicang's blade was infused with the pitch-black energy of decay and corrosion, but the sharp blades that the lion had somehow grown seemed impervious to damage. Killing intent formed a thick aura around them, so concentrated that it could affect material form. However, Zhang Lie remained unaffected despite his proximity. He was resisting the blades' damage with his blades and with formless will.

The nine-headed lifeform roared, its eyes cold. It spat out a mouthful of white light, causing the blades to gleam even more brightly. They pierced through the pitch-black genetic energy shielding Zhang Lie and headed straight for his body.

The fight had reached its climax. Zhang Lie pursed his lips—the blades were too strong, and there were a whole 28 of them! It would be difficult to handle them all simultaneously.

The blades flew toward him and pinned him down with overwhelming strength, causing the land to crumble where they landed.

Each blade was like a thick pillar; if any were to strike Zhang Lie, he wouldn't be pierced through, but rather ground into meat paste.

As all 28 blades landed simultaneously, Zhang Lie barely dodged them one by one. Space around him warped and distended; 28 black holes formed, one around each blade, trapping him in an unavoidable attack.

Even so, the fighting spirit in Zhang Lie's eyes only grew more intense.

"[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 that flew at the nine-headed lion.

Resplendent silver light, like armor, blocked the blood dragon and the black genetic energy it commanded.

As Guicang glowed, the blood dragon roared. It tore apart the white light; fresh blood flowed.

The nine-headed lion grew incensed, and its aura strengthened even further. The 28 blades gleamed with killing intent and shot toward Zhang Lie once more, swamping the battlefield in white light.

"Come!" Zhang Lie shouted, unsheathing Hanguang. "[Syzygy]!"

A pitch-black sun appeared behind Zhang Lie, and a blood moon by his feet. 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 nine-headed lion's 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.

Fresh blood sprayed once again as the nine-headed lion suffered another blow. It roared in outrage, spitting out a ball of hazy light, charged with skeins of radiant energy so bright they were evaporating in the air. A thousand rays of rosy light, in an endless stream, enveloped all that lay below.

Chapter 1215: The One and Only King

Bright sword energy radiated from Zhang Lie like brilliant rays of sunlight, illuminating the entirety of the new world.

"[First Form: Parting the River]!"

A frightening force spread out from Zhang Lie, 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 nine-headed lion opened its maws wide open and swallowed all that lay around him, all sorts of boulders flying into the air and being sucked into his mouth.

Zhang Lie shouted, lifting Guicang high up in the air. He flicked his arm and sent a burst of sword energy through the air, blocking the nine-headed lion's breath attack and leaving a scar on its forehead.

The lion growled. 28 silver blades trembled as one, shooting straight at Zhang Lie in an attempt to pierce through him. The nine-headed lion used its full strength in an attempt to kill the human hunters before it.

Zhang Lie's pupils were cold. As he whirled Guicang around him, a frightening burst of sword energy spread out like a tsunami, cutting all 28 blades apart.

The nine-headed lion howled in fury, but Zhang Lie was in the acme of his strength. He charged forward with Guicang.

The nine-headed lion stared at him with baleful eyes. Radiant light shot out from its mouth straight at Zhang Lie, who shattered the light with the blade Guicang.

"[Shadow and Light]!"

Zhang Lie whirled around. Time suddenly sped up in the vicinity of Zhang Lie.

The outcome of this battle had been decided. Zhang Lie slashed forward as the nine-headed lion howled, fresh blood spurting from its wounds. Before it could react, one of its hind legs had been chopped off.

The nine-headed lion tried to resist, but Zhang Lie was too quick under the effects of the time dilation. By the time it could react, its body had been bisected. A sword thrust straight through its heart.

[You successfully killed the post-monarch-grade beast of a hundred forms. By consuming the flesh of the post-monarch-grade beast of a hundred forms, you may receive one to five emperor gene fragments.]

The moment Zhang Lie pulled out his blade, the multicolored light in the air flashed. Zhu and the restored will had successfully repaired the realm and stabilized the unified world.

Zhu extracted herself from the multicolored scale, which merged into the heart of the realm. As the will of the world departed, it favored Zhang Lie with a smile.

Without Zhang Lie's presence, the third realm would long since have collapsed; it would hardly have been able to repair itself.

The fragmented will had no thoughts of its own; just like an incomplete computer, all it could do was operate according to its programming. After being restored, however, it became much like artificial intelligence, with a will and judgment all its own. It was naturally thankful to Zhang Lie for what he had done.

The will of the realm knew that, even if it could have restored itself, it would have been unable to defend against the nine-headed lion while it was repairing the deepest layers of space. In the end, the nine-headed lion would have devoured it whole.

From Zhang Lie's perspective, the existence of the nine-headed lion was entirely his fault, but the will of the realm had a broader perspective. Even without Zhang Lie's involvement, there would have been some kind of trouble or another, and the nine-headed lion had coincidentally been the calamity at the right place and time.

This was an affair of karma and fate; a calamity was fated to appear, and Zhang Lie was fated to resolve it.

Of course, Zhang Lie was yet unaware of the greater machinations of karma and fate, and his perspective as a single hunter was limited. Even if he were aware of his role, however, he would have been happy to take part—obtaining the next grade of gene fragments this early was a tremendous boon.

The unified world expanded ten times in size after its restoration. Perhaps this was how the realm should have been in the first place—but despite being a new world, it didn't look brand-new at all.

After the calamity of the nine-headed lion, the unified world now looked somewhat battle-worn and shabby.

The light in Zhu's eyes dimmed as the draconic robe faded away from her body, as did the crown floating above her head. Zhu became a young woman again, though her body radiated a formless aura. With a moment's thought, she teleported to Zhang Lie's back and leapt toward him.

"Zhang Lie!"

Zhu nuzzled Zhang Lie's neck from the back, while Zhang Lie sighed in exasperation.

"You're the ruler of this realm now! You can't be behaving like a young woman."

"But I've always been a young woman. After all, even if I were the ruler of all worlds, I'd still be a young woman in front of you."

Zhang Lie sighed. "Has the condition of the world stabilized?"

"Do you mean the void?" Zhu asked.

"Everything," Zhang Lie replied.

"The dragon scale and I worked very hard to repair the realm. The world itself is... alright... but because of your fight with that odious lifeform, Zhang Lie, this world almost collapsed!"

Zhang Lie dipped his head in apology.

Zhu continued, "However, it won't be that easy to damage this world anymore. You don't have to worry, Zhang Lie. After a bit more time, the world will have fully stabilized, and the will and I will be around to take care of any mishaps."

Zhu continued, "As for the void, the will and I have patched up what we can. The rest will heal by itself; fixing up the rest is tedious work, and not particularly rewarding. At the very least, the realm is safe for the moment."

Zhang Lie released a deep breath and rubbed Zhu's head in praise. The immediate danger was past, then.

Zhu closed her eyes in relaxation.

Zhang Lie continued, "What powers do you have now as the ruler of the third realm?"

Zhu replied, "I have a piece of good news and a piece of bad news. Which would you rather hear first?"

"Either is fine."

"The bad news is that the system of government you wanted to set up will be impossible."

Zhu had learned of Zhang Lie's plans for the third realm while fixing it up.

"I am the only, as well as the last, ruler of this realm."

Zhang Lie seemed rather surprised. "What do you mean?"

"As you know, the wills of the three thousand worlds were fragments of the shattered will of the realm."

Chapter 1216: Limitless Authority

"Because these fragments aren't capable of independent thought, they needed intelligent lifeforms to help manage their associated worlds. Now that the will of the third realm has been restored, however, kings of the realm are no longer necessary.

"I will be the last ruler acknowledged by the third realm, and no successors shall follow me."

Because Zhu had been the one to meld the proofs of kingship together, and because she had assisted the nascent will before it had come into its power,

Zhu was allowed to remain in this position for now, but she would be the last of her kind.

Zhang Lie continued, "And the good news?"

"The good news is that, as ruler of this unified world, I have immense privilege." She snapped her fingers, and the world's energy began to fluctuate.

The energy of the unified world was a few grades beyond even a superior world's energy. Where the world had been impacted by Zhang Lie's fight against the nine-headed lion, the land repaired itself; no traces of damage remained.

Zhu smiled. "Furthermore, even if I leave the third realm, it'll continue operating as is."

Zhang Lie returned the special lifeform's carcass to his dimensional storage.

"Let's go back, then."

Zhu teleported the two of them back to the palace, where the crowds cheered to see Zhang Lie and Zhu return. The fact that the unified world no longer shook or trembled, and no further spatial rifts or void storms spawned, meant that the plan had gone successfully.

The members of Team Zenith returned to report to Zhang Lie.

"Sorry, Captain, but the monarch-grade lifeforms resisted violently. We had to kill ten of them along the way, and there are only five left alive."

Zhang Lie waved a hand. With a ruler of the unified world around, it'll be far easier to cultivate monarch-grade lifeforms. We don't have to worry about them anymore."

"Really?"

The eyes of the members of Team Zenith lit up.

Zhu patted her chest. "Leave it to me. There'll be at least fifty times more such lifeforms than before—eat your fill."

The members of Team Zenith cheered. Zhang Lie laughed along with them and said, "As for the monarch-grade lifeforms you killed, make a feast out of them. Bring the other genetic lifeforms that perished over and have the genetic hunters without maxed gene fragments split them up and consume them. We'll celebrate the birth of a new unified world, and the start of a new chapter of the history of the third realm."

The hunters cheered and feasted. The members of the Zenith Dojo and those hunters who hadn't evacuated had received a tremendous boon from the creation of a unified world; it was more than worth the risk.

Just then, the genetic hunters who had departed from the realm began to stream back from the Milky Way, many regretting that they had left so hastily.

Zhang Lie killed the remaining monarch-grade lifeforms in the farm.

[You successfully killed the monarch-grade blackwind elf. By consuming the flesh of the monarch-grade blackwind elf, you may receive one to ten monarch gene fragments.]

[You successfully killed the monarch-grade inkscale leopard. By consuming the flesh of the monarch-grade inkscale leopard, you may receive one to ten monarch gene fragments.]

[You successfully killed the monarch-grade starburst eagle. By consuming the flesh of the monarch-grade starburst eagle, you may receive one to ten monarch gene fragments.]

With Zhu imposing a field of time dilation over the farm and furnishing it with the unified world's energy, monarch-grade lifeforms could be cultivated within just a few days.

[For consuming the flesh of a monarch-grade blackwind elf, you received one monarch gene fragment. Current total: 98]

[For consuming the flesh of a monarch-grade blackwind elf, you received one monarch gene fragment. Current total: 99]

[For consuming the flesh of a monarch-grade blackwind elf, you received one monarch gene fragment. Current total: 100]

When Zhang Lie maxed out his monarch gene fragments, he felt a wellspring of strength suffuse him from within his body. Zhu immediately established a pocket dimension and dragged Zhang Lie inside.

The pocket dimension was filled with the unified world's energy, and it was far purer and stronger than anything he had ever encountered.

This energy, which the superior kings of antiquity would have given all their possessions for even a meager bit of, Zhu was squandering as though it was worthless. In such an energy-filled environment, even a pig could have been cultivated all the way to disaster-grade.

Zhang Lie breathed in the unified world's energy and circulated it through his body, as though burying seeds deep within the earth and watching them sprout with life.

Zhang Lie sat cross-legged in that pocket dimension, deep in meditation, his body forging itself anew with every breath.

An indeterminate amount of time passed, but Zhang Lie remained perfectly in harmony with his environment the entire time. Without anyone to disturb him, without any sudden fluctuations to his emotions, he gradually began to smile, a reflection of his heart and inner being.

Light began to shine from his body. He was surrounded by a glowing ball of light, and the skin beneath that was revealed was a pearly white, supple and smooth.

A spiritual glow suffused him.

His bones cracked as they became even stronger and sturdier, taking on a metallic luster. A membrane of crystalline light formed over their surface, strengthening them, improving their ductility and hardness. His body was being reforged from the inside out and the outside in, as though becoming that of a deity.

Muscle, flesh, skin, and bone merged together in a flash of blinding light, which coalesced into a skin-like membrane that gave Zhang Lie a holy, immaculate appearance.

He looked like a man from the heavens above, one untouched and unsullied by mortal contact.

Membranes of diaphanous light brimmed with vitality.

In that transcendent state, time passed in the blink of an eye. He spent a week in meditation, freed of worry, freed of strife, freed of turmoil and dissonance. There he found an intrinsic joy.

Zhang Lie breathed out with a puff of light. The air that was sucked into his body took on the shape of dragons. He breathed with a particular rhythm, neither quick nor slow, ever following the pulse of the world...

Chapter 1217: Shattering the World

The air that Zhang Lie inhaled took on the form of dragons. As he exhaled, those dragons coiled around his body and transformed into genetic energy. Behind Zhang Lie appeared swimming pale blue fish, an ink-black serpent, a resplendent golden tiger, a heavysset dragonturtle, a flaming hed lion, and an electrified wyrm.

These unusual manifestations and concentrated aura of genetic energy surrounding Zhang Lie made him seem mysterious indeed. The transformation of his physical body fused his flesh, organs, and bones together, combining them into a single entity.

After half a month passed by, Zhang Lie slowly opened his eyes. His pupils were bright and filled with vital energy, with a spiritual glow that made him look like a supernatural entity.

It was obvious that he had broken through and elevated himself to an entirely new level of strength.

Spirituality illuminated him from within and without. He sat cross-legged like a deity, with a luminous haze surrounding him and seeping into his body.

The membranes that surrounded his bones and organs had vanished, absorbed into his body and replaced by the essence of divinity.

Zhang Lie: a disaster-grade lifeform

Techniques: Rippling Walk (pinnacle), Three-Wave Crescendo (pinnacle), Calm Waters (pinnacle), Fists of the Silent Sea (pinnacle), The Boundless Blade (pinnacle), Eclipse (pinnacle), Syzygy (pinnacle), Ninesoul Dragonblade (pinnacle), Blade of the Heavens (pinnacle)

Genes: Basic, 160; Mutated, 150; Superior, 150; Peak, 150; Disaster, 100; Monarch, 100

Soulshards: White Grub (superior), Blood Ant (superior), Potbellied Toad (mutated), Eternalspring Cocoon (superior), Dragonwolf (superior), Moonlight Wyrm (peak), Golden Roc (peak), Dragonwhale (disaster), Mismeld Clam (disaster)

Zhang Lie felt stronger than he had ever been.

The image of a dragonturtle manifested behind Zhang Lie, and his water-attuned genetic energy turned heavy and sluggish. Genetic energy rippled around him like the tides, or a swamp of darkness.

The four runic tablets appeared around the dragonturtle. The black tablets had been inscribed with runes from the Keys of the Elder Gods, which were slowly revolving. An ancient, holy hymn seemed to suffuse them with spirituality.

Somehow, Zhang Lie thought he could vaguely sense the form of a priest who was endowing the runes with strength amidst the worship of tens of thousands of citizens.

Zhang Lie was shocked that, upon maxing out his monarch gene fragments, his dragonturtle transformation seemed to be evolving.

The four runic tablets were vibrating in resonance with Zhang Lie's body.

The runic text, abstruse and incomprehensible, floated out from the tablets and surrounded Zhang Lie. The runes imprinted themselves on Zhang Lie's flesh—without the scorching pain of branding, but with an itching sensation all over.

No ordinary hunter would be able to withstand this process; their physical bodies would collapse.

Zhang Lie himself wouldn't have been able to withstand the process if not for having maxed out his monarch gene fragments in advance.

His cells seemed to come to life, basking in the runic radiance and absorbing the runes directly into themselves.

Zhang Lie recalled what had happened to Ubbo, and the slime-like beings that surrounded his body. The runes were endowing Zhang Lie's cells with some sort of rudimentary spirituality that allowed them to act independently and bud off from his flesh.

"I had better take the lead, then..." Zhang Lie murmured. He nudged the runes all over his body and marshaled them into streams of genetic energy, forming a net-like lattice.

His limbs glowed with light, as though possessed of some unearthly intelligence.

With his genetic energy, Zhang Lie guided and arranged rune and cell. Each cell was a planet, each rune a satellite. Zhang Lie carefully reordered them all.

The structure of his body had changed. The runes and cells, in conjunction, formed solar systems of their own, and multiple solar systems formed a galaxy. A moment's thought merged them with blood and bone, flesh and organ.

In that instant, Zhang Lie felt as though his strength had improved by leaps and bounds. The runes that he had integrated into his body filled him with boundless, mysterious strength, as though he had an everburning furnace within his body providing him with vital energy.

Zhang Lie couldn't help but stand up and punch forward. The pocket dimension that Zhu had woven was unable to withstand the sudden surge of energy, and it began to crack apart. The unified world quivered; the humans and aliens were shocked by the sudden disturbance, and they thought that something had happened to the third realm again.

Zhu herself stepped in to quell the disturbance.

As the unified world quaked, the draconian sage, the scaleman king, Li Zongming, and Yun Bing, who were discussing law and order in the new world, felt sweat beading their foreheads.

The draconian sage cried, "This has to be Zhang Lie's fault!"

The others present all agreed.

Only Zhang Lie could have caused such a massive disturbance so quickly.

"[Energy has exceeded maximum threshold. Activating third-realm transferral routine.]

A familiar voice rang out in his mind.

"[Energy has exceeded maximum threshold. Activating third-realm...]

[Energy has...]

The will of the realm's announcement rang out urgently. The next moment, multicolored light wrapped around Zhang Lie like a cocoon.

"I don't intend to ascend yet!"

Zhang Lie punched his way out of the cocoon in a burst of strength.

The will of the realm manifested as a multicolored dragon scale. Zhu hurriedly stepped forward. "Will, Zhang Lie doesn't intend to ascend yet. Can he temporarily remain in the realm?"

The scale glanced at Zhu, then at Zhang Lie, before dematerializing once again.

Luckily, Zhu had interceded in time, or Zhang Lie would have wreaked extreme devastation.

Rather than grumble at him, however, Zhu hugged him tightly.

"Congratulations, Zhang Lie!"

Zhang Lie smiled. "There's nothing to be so excited about. Instead, I have to apologize. I didn't affect the unified world's foundations, did I?"

Zhu shook her head. "No, no, it's no problem at all! Even if you were to destroy the third realm, it would be fine."

Zhang Lie rolled his eyes. "You're the ruler of the realm!" This isn't the sort of thing you should be saying.

Zhu didn't mind at all. "Zhang Lie, the will told me that you can stay in the third realm as long as you want, but you can't use your full power while you're here. You're far too strong now, and you could cause irreparable damage to the realm if you did so."

Chapter 1218: Contacting Hong Tianqi

Zhu warned, "Zhang Lie, if you want to strike at full force, you must let me know beforehand. I'll set up a pocket space for you to do so."

Zhang Lie pulled out a piece of paper. "Does the unified world have these herbs?"

On the paper was the recipe for the disaster-grade Potion #5.

Zhang Lie had gathered the main ingredients for the potion among the three thousand worlds, and there were only a few secondary ingredients that he now had to find. As the new ruler of the unified world, Zhu boasted an encyclopedic knowledge of everything within, and it would be far faster to ask her.

Potion #5 was different from the four other potions that had come before it.

The recipes for all four of the previous potions were known to Zhang Lie from his past life, and Zhang Lie only had to follow the recipe to brew the potions. On the other hand, he only had rudimentary research about Potion #5, and it would take him significant experimentation, coupled with his understanding of genes and the limit-breaking potions, to succeed.

When Zhang Lie first ascended to the third realm, he didn't have the strength to gather more of the main ingredients. Now, however, with Zhu as the ruler of the unified world, he would be able to source as many of the ingredients as he wanted.

"I'll have to see," Zhu replied, eyeing the list.

"In that case, I'll thank you for your help in advance, Zhu!"

Zhu waved a hand airily. "There's no need to be so polite, Zhang Lie. If not for you, I could hardly have lived past childhood."

Zhang Lie retrieved the special lifeform's carcass from his dimensional storage, roasted it, and then consumed it.

[For consuming the flesh of an emperor-grade beast of a hundred forms, you received one emperor gene fragment. Current total: 1]

Zhang Lie felt warm energy spread through his limbs upon consuming a bite of the special lifeform's flesh.

"So beyond monarch-grade is emperor-grade," he mused to himself.

Zhang Lie continued eating the meat.

[For consuming the flesh of an emperor-grade beast of a hundred forms, you received one emperor gene fragment. Current total: 2]

[For consuming the flesh of an emperor-grade beast of a hundred forms, you received one emperor gene fragment. Current total: 3]

[For consuming the flesh of an emperor-grade beast of a hundred forms, you received one emperor gene fragment. Current total: 4]

As he ate mouthful after mouthful of meat, his stomach felt as though a volcano was about to erupt. Strength frothed; light radiated from his body.

"As expected of emperor gene fragments..."

A single emperor gene fragment was stronger than ten monarch gene fragments. Unfortunately, despite consuming the special lifeform whole, Zhang Lie only received five such fragments.

Zhang Lie: a disaster-grade lifeform

Techniques: Rippling Walk (pinnacle), Three-Wave Crescendo (pinnacle), Calm Waters (pinnacle), Fists of the Silent Sea (pinnacle), The Boundless Blade (pinnacle), Eclipse (pinnacle), Syzygy (pinnacle), Ninesoul Dragonblade (pinnacle), Blade of the Heavens (pinnacle)

Genes: Basic, 160; Mutated, 150; Superior, 150; Peak, 150; Disaster, 100; Monarch, 100; Emperor, 5

Soulshards: White Grub (superior), Blood Ant (superior), Potbellied Toad (mutated), Eternalspring Cocoon (superior), Dragonwolf (superior), Moonlight Wyrms (peak), Golden Roc (peak), Dragonwhale (disaster), Mismeld Clam (disaster)

Zhang Lie raised his head and asked, "Zhu, can you cultivate more emperor-grade lifeforms?"

"Like the one you just consumed, Zhang Lie?"

"Can you?"

Zhu shook her head. "That was pure chance, nothing more. I can experiment and attempt to figure it out, but it might take me two or three decades."

If she were to dedicate herself to farming, some would surely appear from random chance alone, if nothing else.

"Forget it, then."

Zhang Lie certainly didn't want to remain in the third realm for two or three decades.

"I'll go see if I can find the ingredients you need, then, Zhang Lie." Zhu teleported away in a flash.

Zhang Lie had just returned to where the human hunters were residing and was about to rest when Zhang Hanxiang found him. "Brother, the highest authority is looking for you!"

"Hong Tianqi? What for?"

Zhang Hanxiang shrugged. "Why else? To learn about what happened in the third realm, of course."

"Ah, I suppose so."

Zhang Lie had mentioned the collapse of the third realm to Hong Tianqi and received aid from him. Afterwards, he had been too busy maxing out on monarch gene fragments to report back to him.

"I'll go have a chat with Hong Tianqi, then!"

He strode through the teleportation apparatus and returned to the Zenith Dojo, whereupon Zhang Hong immediately asked, "What's the situation like in the third realm?"

Zhang Lie frowned. "Haven't you heard the news yet?"

It had been quite a few days since the unified world was established. Despite the time dilation, surely some of the hunters who had returned from the third realm had posted about their experience online.

Zhang Hong replied, "I learned of the news on the forums, of course, but I wanted to ask you about how much is rumor and how much fact."

"A crisis occurred in the third realm, but it's been resolved," Zhang Lie replied, "so there's no need for you to worry. I'll go chat with Hong Tianqi for a bit."

Zhang Lie returned to his room, where he attempted to contact Hong Tianqi. Evidently, Hong Tianqi was still busy; his secretary picked up instead.

Zhang Lie said, "If Authority Hong is still busy, I'll call back later."

Unlike before, there wasn't an urgent crisis looming on the horizon, and Zhang Lie could afford to wait patiently.

However, Hong Tianqi's secretary immediately replied, "Please don't hang up, Dojo Leader Zhang. The authority has requested to be notified whenever you contact him. Please allow me to inform him of this now."

"There's no need to rush. The immediate crisis is over, and I have time."

The secretary, meanwhile, had informed Hong Tianqi of the call.

"Dojo Leader Zhang, please wait for five minutes. Once the authority has dealt with his current business, he'll contact you immediately."

"Very well. I'll wait."

Zhang Lie began to surf the web.

The world federation had already sent out word that the third realm was stable once more, but there was no information of the fact that Zhang Lie and the others had unified the three thousand worlds into one.

News of the third realm had always been kept under wraps even on the forums; those hunters who had yet to ascend to the given realm weren't able to access specific information pertaining to that realm.

Zhang Lie glanced at the hunters' reactions to the news.

"So the news that the third realm was about to collapse was real after all! We all thought that the world federation was disseminating fake news—who would have believed that the realm could have just suddenly collapsed?"

"Thank goodness Zhang Lie took preventive measures against such an incident. Otherwise, the third realm might have been finished! Imagine if the hunters of the third realm hadn't evacuated in time..."

"Zhang Lie has saved not only the third realm, but also the lives of all hunters within!"

Chapter 1219: Zhang Lie Cedes Authority

"Zhang Lie is a true hero! He saved the third realm and all hunters within it."

Zhang Lie's heroism had spread throughout the forums.

"If not for Zhang Lie learning about this news ahead of time and taking preventive measures, we'd all be done for!"

"I was responsible for helping unify the third realm as well. When faced with a problem like the impending collapse of the high-dimensional spaces of the third realm, I certainly wouldn't have thought of unifying the three thousand worlds to stop it from happening."

"The three thousand worlds have been in tumult for so long... To think it was a hunter from the Milky Way who ended up unifying them."

"It's a pity that I left so quickly. Allegedly, upon unification, the hunters, aliens, and lifeforms on the unified world received the blessing of the restored will of the third realm and were greatly strengthened."

"That's right! After receiving that blessing, a hunter with maxed peak gene fragments could take on three opponents with the same but without the blessing."

The whole of the forums was in an uproar about what had happened in the third realm, but Zhang Lie didn't have the opportunity to read more posts. Just then, Hong Tianqi contacted him back.

"You've worked hard."

"Is something the matter? I heard you wanted to find me," Zhang Lie replied.

Hong Tianqi said, "I wanted to learn directly from you about what happened in the third realm."

"Did the hunters from the third realm not inform you of the situation?"

Hong Tianqi replied, "After all, you're the one who unified the third realm, and I'd like to learn about matters directly from the source."

"There's not much to say. We found that the high-dimensional spaces of the third realm were about to collapse. I came up with a strategy to deal with the problem, then returned to Earth to ask for your help, went back to the third realm, and executed it."

Zhang Lie summarized the events that had transpired. "I'm not the amazing one—it's simply that my subordinates and colleagues are all very talented."

Hong Tianqi steepled his hands to prop up his jaw. His eyes brightened. "It's basically what I learned, then. Now: does that mean that you're the ruler of the third realm?"

Zhang Lie rolled his eyes. "Is this why you summoned me back?"

Hong Tianqi replied, "I'm the highest authority of the world federation, after all. It's only natural that I'd like to understand the new structure of the third realm and the positions of power within it, king of the third realm."

Zhang Lie raised his hands in mock surrender. "Hold on, hold on! There's no such thing as the king of the third realm. I was simply once the king of the second realm—that's it!"

Hong Tianqi blinked in surprise. "You unified the third realm, and you didn't crown yourself king?"

Zhang Lie shrugged helplessly. "There's no fun to being king. I was one once in the second realm, and I don't want to be one again. There's nothing of interest and far too many responsibilities—it was lucky that I ascended quickly, or I'd be going bald."

Hong Tianqi chuckled wryly. "I suppose you might be the only one who feels that way."

He had expected that Zhang Lie would take over the third realm, which would save him significant trouble.

Zhang Lie had the qualifications and strength to take on such a position, and no one in the third realm could stop him. Zhu could well be exiled to the high-dimensional spaces of the realm, and no one would care.

The fact that Zhang Lie wasn't going to take such a position, however, gave Hong Tianqi a headache.

Hong Tianqi rubbed at his temples as he asked, "Who are the people in charge of the third realm, then? The ruler of the new unified world?"

Zhang Lie replied, "The ruler of the unified world will abstain from political office. According to the current discussions, the three thousand worlds will become three thousand kingdoms, with

limited differences in terms of governance. Four superior kingdoms will take the lead among the three thousand."

These kingdoms would be represented by the former Zongming world, the former scaleman world, the former draconian world, and the coalition of Milky Way hunters.

"The four superior kingdoms will maintain law and order within the unified world, and they'll establish a Limit Committee to do so. The committee will be populated by representatives of hunters and aliens."

Hong Tianqi remarked, "You really are dead set on not taking power, aren't you?"

"After all, I'll be ascending to the fourth realm soon enough. It won't make sense for me to take power now; I just want to ensure that the Zenith Dojo has some amount of authority and status."

Zhang Lie no longer needed to pioneer new organizations as he did in the second realm, where he founded the kingdom of Limit and established sanctuary for the Zenith Dojo.

The disciples of the Zenith Dojo were rapidly growing strong, and the average disciple now surpassed a Milky Way hunter in strength. Even the four prime races might not be a match.

Zhang Lie intended to leave the unified world as a stage on which the disciples of the Zenith Dojo would be challenged.

There were few challenges for them in the first realm, and the second realm was entirely controlled by the Zenith Dojo. The disciples would grow lax in such a peaceful environment; Zhang Lie didn't want to rear pigs, but rather wolves.

If he were to continue smoothing out the path for the dojo's disciples, they would soon stagnate.

In the end, after careful thought, Zhang Lie decided to leave the unified world of the third realm as a challenge for the disciples, allowing them to develop and explore it at will, to create a haven for themselves. To them, he would leave behind his farm of genetic lifeforms, which would be more than sufficient to arm the disciples against even coordinated attacks by the other three superior kingdoms.

Of course, as long as Zhang Lie was within the third realm, no one would dare to do so, but Zhang Lie and the members of Team Zenith were destined to head to the fourth realm eventually. There might not be such a rebellion in a century, but how about in two or three? It would be far harder to be certain then.

With the firm foundation that Zhang Lie and the members of Team Zenith had established, however, even if there were some corrupt disciples among the ranks of the Zenith Dojo, it would be centuries before they dealt enough damage to destroy what Zhang Lie had laid down.

After finishing his discussion with Hong Tianqi, Zhang Lie again returned to the third realm. The moment he did so, he sensed a violent quake. Eight sources of energy formed hurricanes over the world, surprising Zhang Lie.

He sensed a familiar energy. "These people have all maxed out their monarch gene fragments..."

He stepped forward, shattered space, and teleported to the source of the disturbance, where the members of Team Zenith had gathered.

Zhu was attempting to suppress the instability caused by the eight hunters, but there were so many of them that she was having a hard time. Zhang Lie lent her assistance and quelled the disturbance immediately.

Chapter 1220: A Quick Spar

Standing amidst the hurricanes of energy were eight figures. Even Zhu's pocket space proved insufficient at isolating the energies that surrounded them.

Sun Mengmeng was wrapped in pitch-black flame. The air was scorching and aflame.

Yang Ze was wrapped in a pale blue ocean, shining like a mirror, illusions and mirages surrounding him. Stormy waves lapped at him but didn't expand beyond a certain radius around him, as though he were in a pocket space entirely his own.

Sun Xiaowu was illuminated with golden light, and behind him was the manifestation of a martial god that took on Zhang Lie's form.

Silvery-white light shrouded Li Feng. An arclight dragon coiled around him and soared into the sky.

Wind and storm circled Fang Yi, along with the less obvious energies of fate and chaos.

Zhou Ying was the most special. Her long hair fluttered in the wind, the color of crystalline jade. It gave off motes of vitality. She was so beautiful no one could take their eyes away, and golden leaves whirled around her. The tips of her hair produced gray fog.

The gray power gathered around Zhou Ying's forehead, which cracked apart. A gray eye budded from her flesh. It opened up to reveal a chaotic opal iris, which seemed to be able to penetrate flesh, soul, and space.

Each leaf was like a miniature sun, orbiting around the woman's body. To her back was a pair of golden wings formed from energy. Above her head was a glowing sun, giving off a radiant, holy light.

Her jade-green eyes were flecked with gold, and she seemed to have become one with the land. The vitality radiating from her was visible to the naked eye. Stellar light surrounded her as though she were a goddess given form.

Black energy formed a gauzy dress around her, sticking closely to her limbs and revealing her curvaceous features—no, making them even more curvaceous than they originally were.

Where her body was slim, it remained slim; where it protruded, it protruded even more. Two root-like tendrils writhed under her dress; her body radiated a seductive charm.

It was hard to differentiate whether Zhou Ying was meant to be a holy priestess or a charming succubus. The same woman seemed to possess two different types of charm.

Vitality, natural energy, a golden solar storm, and a mysterious gray power surrounded her.

Zhang Hanxiang stood amidst a blizzard. The ground was frozen, and crystalline flowers of ice formed where she stood.

Hong Xi's eyes glowed. Her left eye morphed into a black sun, and her right eye into a silver moon. To her back, a pitch-black sun and a silver moon rose into the air. Their light illuminated the sky.

The black sun and silver moon were linked by a golden thread, which brought them into proximity with each other.

They overlapped perfectly, forming a bright-red wheel of fire. Behind that fiery wheel was a pale-blue moon. The paired celestial bodies illuminated and twirled around each other, forming the heart of a storm of light.

Black flames, a pale-blue ocean, golden light, silver light, wind and storm, life, ice and snow, sun and moon—it was little wonder that Zhu couldn't simultaneously deal with a shocking profusion of such disparate energies all at once.

If Zhang Lie hadn't arrived at the scene, the clash of the eight different whirlwinds of energy could very well have affected the foundation of the unified world.

Zhang Lie belatedly discovered that Jun Jiuxiao and Ye Xianchen were standing guard beyond the boundary of the energy fluctuations.

When the two of them saw Zhang Lie, they headed over to him and bowed. "Greetings, Master!"

Zhang Lie seemed rather surprised to see them there. "Have neither of you maxed out your monarch gene fragments yet?"

Jun Jiuxiao spread his arms. "There aren't enough monarch-grade lifeforms to go around yet, Master, and we decided to help the members of Team Zenith advance first.

Although Zhu was able to cultivate monarch-grade lifeforms quickly, she couldn't do so indefinitely or at scale. While Zhang Lie was away from the third realm, Zhu had cultivated just enough monarch-grade lifeforms to allow the members of Team Zenith to advance, and even that was predicated on the fact that they already had a few monarch gene fragments.

If the members of Team Zenith hadn't killed some of the monarch-grade lifeforms during their rampage and absorbed some monarch gene fragments as a result, they wouldn't have been able to fill up their supply of monarch gene fragments.

Zhang Lie nodded. "Thank you. It's a good idea for the two of you not to advance so quickly—you recently ascended, after all, and you should get used to the third realm first. How are your fragments?"

Jun Jiuxiao replied, "We've maxed out on disaster gene fragments."

Zhang Lie instructed, "Take some time to find the Yeluo chieftain and obtain Potion #4. Start by obtaining peak limit fragments, then familiarize yourselves with the changes to your body. Once your body's more resilient, start taking in monarch gene fragments."

Jun Jiuxiao and Ye Xianchen glanced at each other in excitement.

Although they had learned from the members of Team Zenith that Zhang Lie had developed Potion #4, neither of them dared to ask for it without Zhang Lie offering it first.

To Zhang Lie, Potion #4 wasn't anything particularly precious; but the situation was different in terms of the hunters of the Milky Way.

To other hunters, Potion #4 might as well have been a galactic-class weapon, one that no one dared ask about without Zhang Lie volunteering information beforehand.

"Thank you, Master!" Jun Jiuxiao and Ye Xianchen chorused.

Just then, the members of Team Zenith waded out from their respective storms, which subsided without their presence. Everyone's strength and aura seemed to have increased a few times over.

Zhang Lie smiled. "It looks like all of you have succeeded."

While Zhang Lie was gone from the third realm, the members of Team Zenith had advanced their training and finished maxing out their monarch gene fragments

The members of Team Zenith smiled. Fang Yi stepped forward. "Captain, let's spar!"

Zhang Lie nodded. "Very well. I'd like to see just how much all of you have grown in the last few days, and I can give you some pointers."

With a low shout, Fang Yi dashed forward with his spear in hand. He launched his spear, crackling with wind and lightning, with incredible force. It sent wind howling and lightning flashing through the sky.

With his spear, he invoked chaotic energy in the form of lightning and raging wind. The spear left a dozen afterimages in its wake, surrounding Zhang Lie's body.

"Not bad, not bad!" Zhang Lie praised, but he hadn't taken a single step.

The clash of metal filled the pocket dimension. Fang Yi waved his spear with lethal speed and precision, but Zhang Lie seemed to be able to block all his attacks with careless sweeps of his arm. No matter what he did, the tip of his spear would stop inches from Zhang Lie. Fang Yi knew that Zhang Lie surely had made a move, but his movements were so rapid that Fang Yi didn't detect them at all.

But Fang Yi never gave up. As Fang Yi attacked, Zhang Lie's body was buffeted by billowing winds and a gathering storm. Sparks flew, and a terrifying aura manifested around Fang Yi.